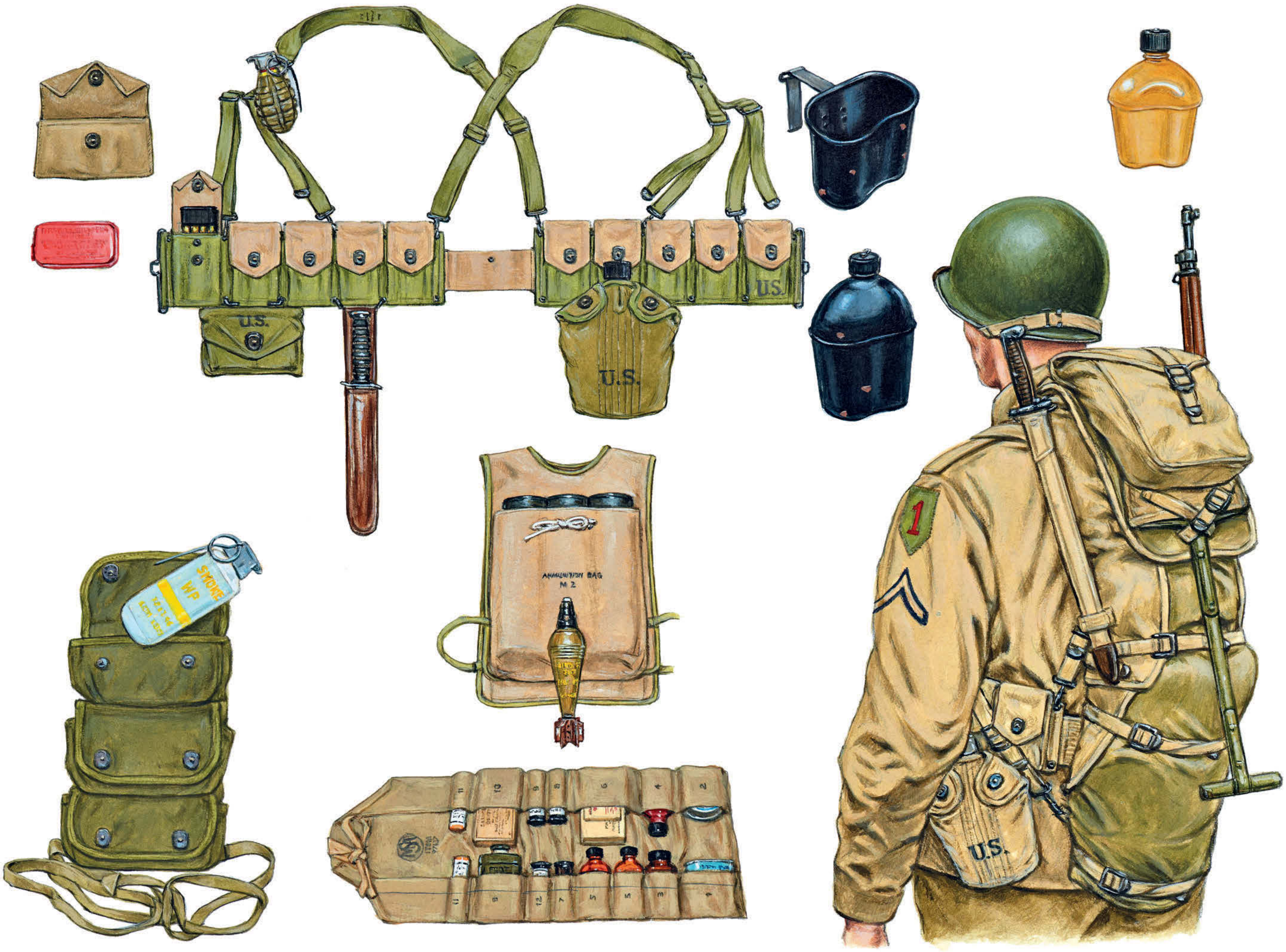
World War II US Army Combat Equipments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GORDON L. ROTTMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY ADAM HOOK

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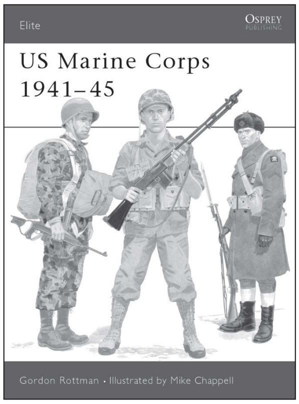
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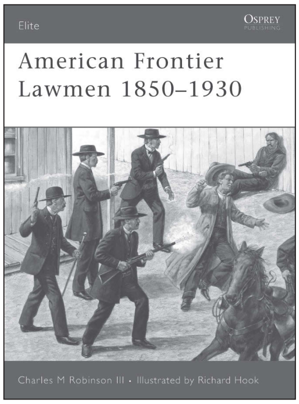
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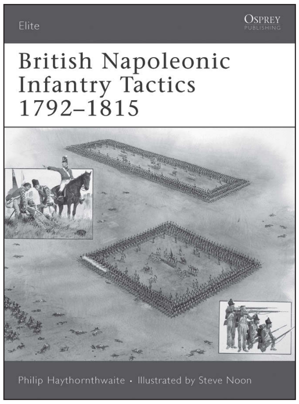
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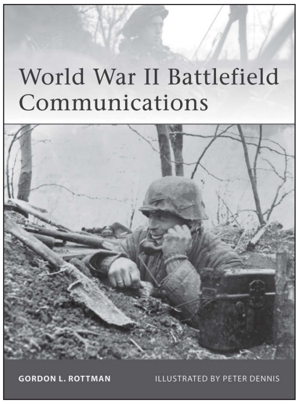
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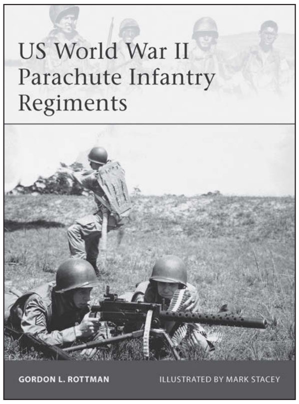
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World War II US Army Combat Equipments

GORDON L. ROTTMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY ADAM HOOK

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Abbreviations used in this text:

BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle (M1918A2) – pronounced "B-A-R," never as "bar."
EM	enlisted man/men
GI	Technically "government issue," but refers to government property, or the average soldier
HMG	heavy machine gun
LMG	light machine gun
LTD	lift-the-dot fastener
MG	machine gun
MP	Military Police
NCO	non-commissioned officer
OD	olive drab color
QM	Quartermaster
rd/rds	round/rounds (single cartridge/s)
SMG	submachine gun
WAC	Women's Army Corps

Weights and measures

US customary units of weights and measures are used in the text. The metric equivalent is provided for liquid weights.

Fahrenheit (°F) temperatures are used in the text, with Celsius/Centigrade (°C) equivalents.

cal	caliber (1/100th of an inch. Thus .30cal (30/100ths of an inch) equates to 7.62mm; .32cal = 7.65mm; .45cal = 11.43mm; and .50cal = 12.7mm.
fl oz	ounce (1 US fl oz = 0.625 US pint = 0.0295 US liter)
ft	foot/feet (12in = 305mm)
gal	gallon (1 US gal = 4 US quarts = 3.785 US liters)
in/ins	inch/inches (1in = 25.4mm)
lb/lbs	pound/pounds (1lb = 16oz = 0.453kg)
mg	milligram (1,000th of a gram)
mi	mile (1,760 yards = 1,609 meters)
oz	ounce (1oz = 0.625lb = 28.35 grams)
qt/qts	quart/quarts (1 US qt = 32 US fl oz = 2 US pints = 0.946 US liter)
yd/yds	yard/yards (3ft = 36in = 914mm)

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WORLD WAR II US ARMY COMBAT EQUIPMENTS

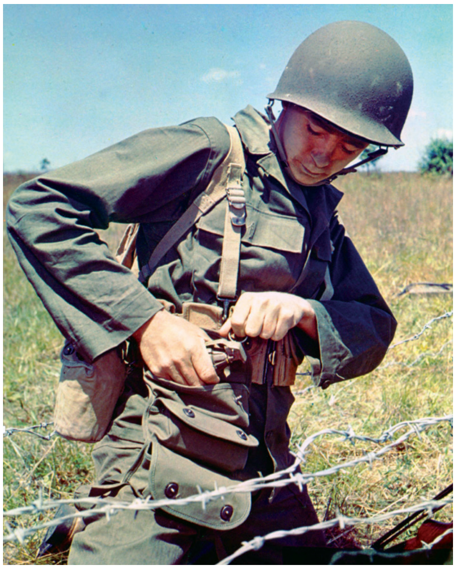
INTRODUCTION

A soldier engaged in combat must be relatively self-sufficient – for at least a day, and sometimes longer. His individual field equipment (commonly referred to in the US as "web gear" from World War I to the present) must be durable, functional, reasonably comfortable to wear, and able to be integrated with other equipment. Besides basic equipment used by most soldiers there were also a great many specialist items, especially those related to the many types of weapons employed by modern armies.

Most of the items of combat equipment discussed here were used within infantry battalions, though many were also used by other types of units. Besides riflemen's equipment, there were items for those armed with carbines, submachine guns (SMGs), automatic rifles, pistols, machine guns, bazookas, and mortars. Other items were specific for officer and NCO leaders, medical aidmen, and other specialists.

The distribution of equipment was specified by Table of Equipment 21, *Clothing and Individual Equipment*, resulting in field equipment being collectively called "T/E 21 gear." T/E 21 provided the allowances of the numbers and types of equipment and clothing according to individual duties, type of unit, and, where appropriate, season. The T/E was very specific, but in combat it meant little – units distributed equipment where it would serve most effectively. Equipment shortages were common. Casualties, both dead and wounded, were often evacuated wearing their equipment rather than it being handed back to the company; in the midst of combat, engaged units were seldom able to collect and redistribute equipment. Replacements arrived with only basic equipment, and there was neither the time nor the resources to issue the extra necessary items; units simply made do, until the division was placed in corps or army reserve for rest and refit.

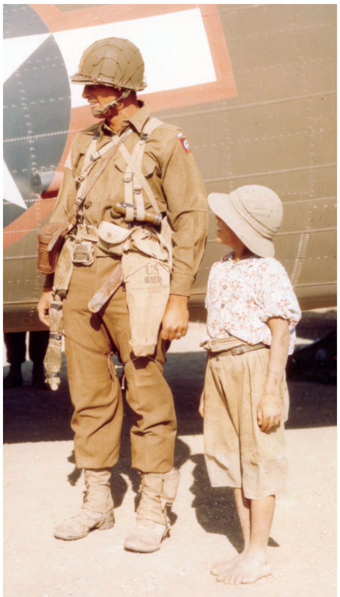
This soldier's M1923 cartridge belt, M1936 suspenders, and M1910 canteen cover are in Olive Drab (OD) Shade No. 9 (tan), while his three-pocket grenade carrier is OD Shade No. 3 (grayish-green); mixing of equipment colors was common. The grenade carrier is the later version, with larger pockets to take smoke and chemical grenades, and two lift-the-dot (LTD) flap fasteners rather than the single central fastener of the earlier model. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)



Units undergoing training and preparation for overseas movement might have been issued obsolescent equipment, or new items might have been fielded since the unit had been activated. Typically, they would be issued the latest items (or at least new equipment, even if of an earlier generation) when they staged for overseas shipment, but some units deployed with the older equipment with which they had trained. Production might not have kept up with the expanding army, or the deployment date might have been brought forward before new equipment arrived.

From 1920, equipment items had borne a reversed official nomenclature to make cataloging and identification easier; for example: "Belt, magazine, BAR, M1937." In this text they are given simply as, e.g., "M1937 BAR magazine belt." Note that the first letter of the key identifying word in the reversed nomenclature – in this example, "Belt" – is the letter in the item's Quartermaster (QM) stock number; in this example, "74-B-240."

Not discussed here are skiing and other Arctic and mountain equipment, nor horse cavalry equipment. Equipment unique to paratroopers is described in Osprey Elite 198, *US World War II Parachute Infantry Regiments*, while Arctic and mountain equipment features in Osprey Men-at-Arms 482, *US 10th Mountain Division in World War II*.

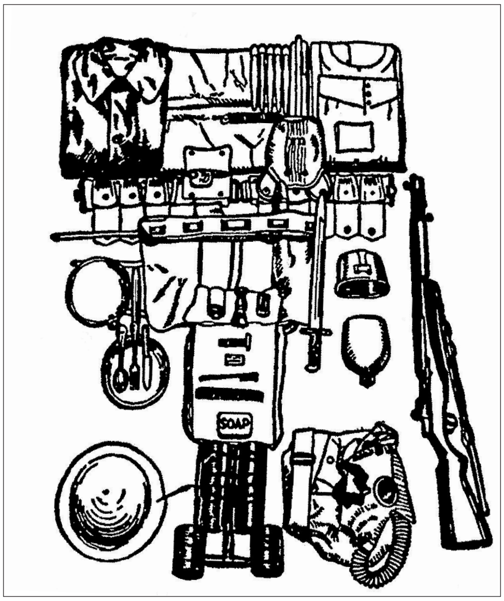


This paratrooper of 82nd Abn Div in North Africa has an M1936 pistol belt and suspenders, early-type double carbine magazine pocket, compass pouch with M1938 lensatic compass, M17 leather case for 6x30 binoculars, M2 service gasmask, M3 trench knife in M6 scabbard, and a TL-122A flashlight on his suspenders. (Tom Laemlein/ Armor Plate Press)

DEVELOPMENT

The American fighting man began World War II with essentially the same equipment as used in World War I, though updated through specification changes and improvements during the 1920s and 1930s. A great deal of equipment fielded during World War I had been of simplified construction to accommodate inexperienced workers, speedy manufacture, and conservation of materials. Most of this was placed in storage or sold off after the Great War.

Most of the equipment discussed here was the responsibility of the Quartermaster Corps, but specialist items came under other branches: the Ordnance Department for weapons and related materials, Corps of Engineers for binoculars and compasses, Signal Corps for communications equipment, Chemical Department for gasmasks, and Medical



This rather crude drawing from a manual shows a soldier's gear laid out for a full field inspection, often conducted on Saturday mornings before passes were granted. It was usually laid out on a shelter half or poncho, or, when in barracks, on a bunk ("junk on a bunk"). Top to bottom, left to right: M1938 raincoat; shelter half, 5x tent pins and three-section pole; long underwear, handkerchief.
M1923 cartridge belt with M1910 first aid pouch and M1910 canteen cover.
M1918 meat can (mess kit) with M1918 utensils; M1928 haversack with pack carrier; M1905 bayonet; M1910 canteen and cup; .30cal M1 Garand rifle with M1907 sling.
Towel with razor and blades, toothbrush, comb, and soapbox.
M1917A1 helmet; C-ration (6x cans, 2 per meal) over M1910 entrenching tool and carrier; M2 service gasmask on its carrier.

Less formal was the "showdown inspection," conducted to confirm that troops possessed all the required equipment and clothing, and to assess its condition; missing, worn or defective items were then replaced. This inspection was conducted before a unit deployed overseas, and when it was brought out of the line for rest and refit. (Texas Military Forces Museum)

Department for medical items. While the different branches were responsible for developing, testing, contracting of production, and distribution, the combat arms – especially the Infantry and Cavalry Boards – had much say in the development and acceptance of each item.

The M1910 equipment might be considered as the first "integrated equipment system," in that all the items including specialist gear were designed to be attached and carried by common means. This included double-hook equipment hangers, and matching eyelets to which they and snaphooks could be fastened. Most of the equipment was adequately designed and well tested, with the exception of the M1910 haversack and its subsequent modified version, the M1928.

By World War II much of the M1910 equipment had been refined, again to speed production and conserve materials. New weapons and other equipment items were introduced at a high rate during the war, so many new web and fabric items were necessary, mainly to accommodate their ammunition. Other new items were developed for shelter and protection in desert, tropical, Arctic, and cold-wet climate conditions.

By the war's end many original items of equipment had been replaced or supplemented by others. This equipment served the US Army through the Korean War (1950–53) and into the 1960s.

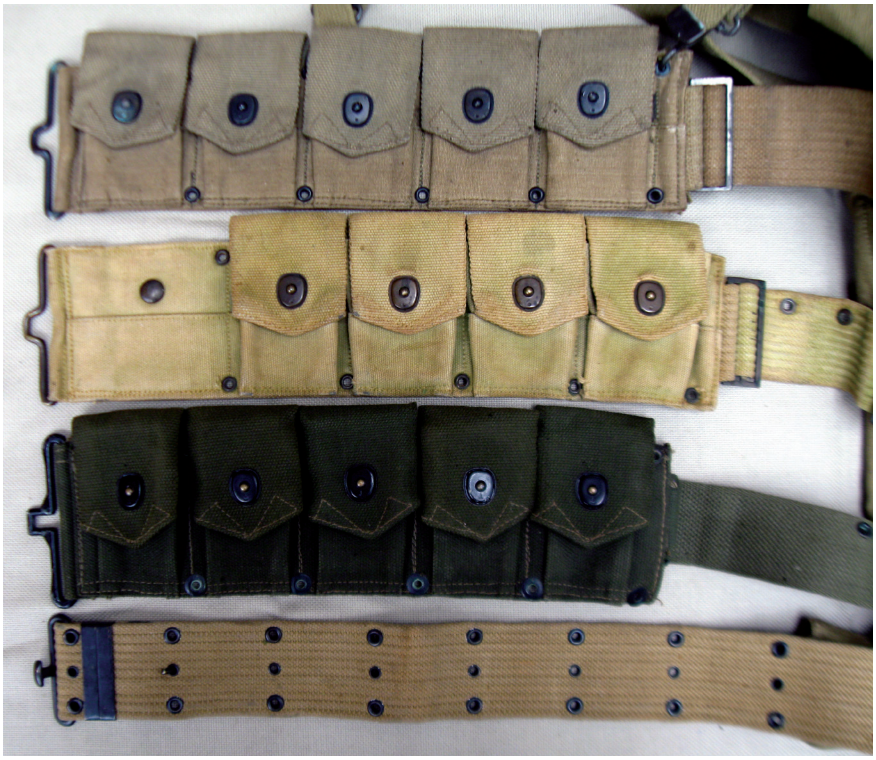
MATERIALS

Field equipment had to be both robust and durable, to withstand not only the rigors of combat but also climatic extremes. It also had to endure the normal abuses inflicted by soldiers – that is, it had to be "GI proof."

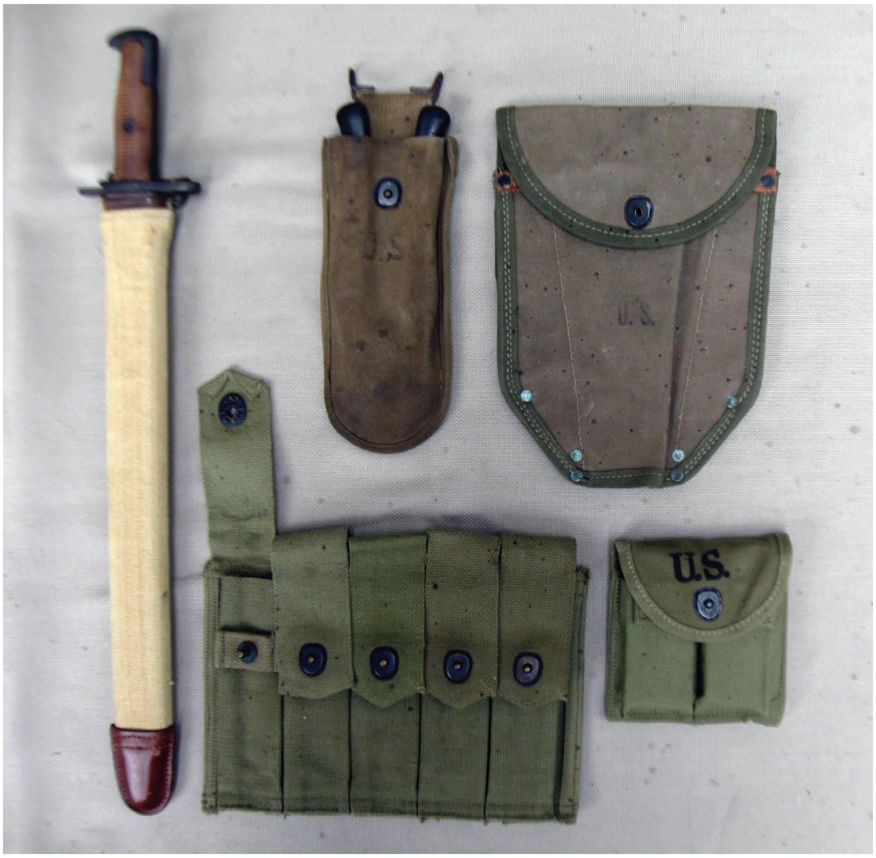
Colors

Most web gear items were "olive drab" (OD), but this was not a single standard shade: OD varied from sand-colored tan to dark brownish green. Shades varied greatly with the fabric texture and density, weave pattern, differences in dye lots, wear, washing, and weathering.

From before the turn of the century and during World War I, web gear colors varied from light tan to light OD, to pea-green, to khaki drab. Between-the-wars web gear was OD Shade No. 9, a tan or sand color with a yellowish tint, but even this varied in shade over time. It is often called "khaki," but khaki is a lighter sand shade lacking the yellowish tint and is associated with cotton uniform cloth. Some tan items had a slight green tint or even a brownish hue. This light tan proved to be too conspicuous, especially in jungles, temperate forests, and on moonlit nights, particularly when worn over contrasting darker OD uniforms. Some troops dabbed or streaked green, black, and/or brown paint on their web gear; this appears to have been done mostly by paratroopers, and troops in the Pacific, and was seldom a unit-wide practice. Tan web gear was useful in visually breaking up the outline of brownish OD uniforms in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.

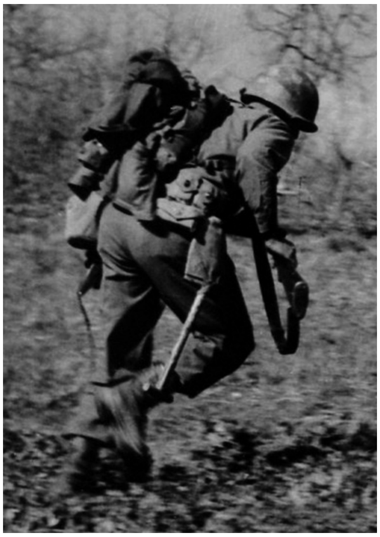


Details of various web belts demonstrating the wide range of OD shades. Top to bottom: Left end, M1923 dismounted cartridge belt with components of two different shades. Left end, M1923 mounted cartridge belt in early-war OD Shade No. 9 (note the space and female snap for the double-pocket pistol magazine pouch). Left end, M1923 dismounted cartridge belt in late-war dark OD Shade No. 7. Right end, M1936 pistol or revolver belt (the left end had the snap for the magazine pouch).



Varying shades of equipment – left to right, top to bottom: M1905 bayonet in M1910 scabbard with tan canvas cover and leather tip; M1938 wire cutters in brownish web carrier (with LTD fastener holding front and back surfaces together between handles); M1943 entrenching shovel carrier, in brownish canvas with darker OD web edging; five-pocket submachine gun (SMG) magazine carrier, and M1 carbine web double magazine pocket, in slightly differing shades of OD No. 3. (Corey Helweg Collection)

A rifleman rushes across a clearing, wearing an M1928 haversack without its "pack carrier" and bedding roll. He has an M1910 entrenching tool attached to his cartridge belt – note how low its T-handle hangs, allowing it to get snagged in vegetation. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)



The Quartermaster Corps' (QMC) World War II history states: "On the eve of World War II, [presumably 1941, no further date available] to promote uniformity, the QMC adopted the standard olive drab shade No. 3 for all personal and organizational equipment using duck and webbing. Later, [April 1944] to conceal military equipment and materiel more effectively, the dark green olive drab shade No. 7 was adopted, because this [darker] color was less visible from the air than the No. 3 shade."[1]

Olive Drab Shade No. 3 was a green with a grayish tint, while OD Shade No. 7 was dark green with a slight brownish tint. To color existing tan canvas and webbing to match green OD uniforms and the new web gear color, the Quartermaster issued "OQMG [Office of the Quartermaster General] No. 3 compound for coloring web equipment." The changes from OD Shade No. 9 to Shade No. 3 and later to Shade No. 7 were far from immediate. Olive Drab Shade No. 9 gear remained in use, usually undyed; existing stocks were issued until exhausted, sometimes throughout the war. It was common for OD Shade No. 9 and Shade No. 3 items to be mixed when equipment was issued to troops. Manufacturers first used up their stocks of OD Shade No. 9 materials, even into 1944. Much equipment was made using remaining OD Shade No. 9

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[1] *The Quartermaster Corps: Organization, Supply, and Services, Vol. I*, page 167.

A

INFANTRYMAN'S EQUIPMENT, 1941–43

In the mid-1920s the US Army improved the designs of many M1910 and World War I web items, and most of these were used throughout World War II. This equipment provided the basis not only for infantrymens' but for most soldiers' assemblies of web gear. Prior to 1943, all web items were in the tan or "khaki" Olive Drab Shade No. 9.

(1) This rifleman is still armed with a .30cal M1903 Springfield bolt-action rifle. Most infantry and other combat-arms units received the .30cal M1 Garand semiautomatic rifle by 1942, although service support units were still deploying overseas with Springfields into 1944. Even when armed with Garands, squads retained one M1903 with an M1 grenade launcher until late 1943, when M7 grenade launchers for the Garand became available. This private first class from 1st Infantry Division carries a fully loaded M1928 haversack, including the bedroll with two wool blankets and a shelter half ("pup tent"), plus spare clothing rolled inside. The M1910 entrenching tool and the M1905 bayonet with M1910 scabbard are fitted to the haversack. When packs were left behind, those items could be attached to the M1923 dismounted cartridge belt, along with the M1924 first aid pouch and M1910 canteen.

(2) M1923 dismounted cartridge belt, configured for wear without the haversack. Depending upon the man's waist size, the bayonet and first aid pouch were hooked under the third to fifth pockets from the left end, and the canteen under the fourth or fifth pocket from the right end.

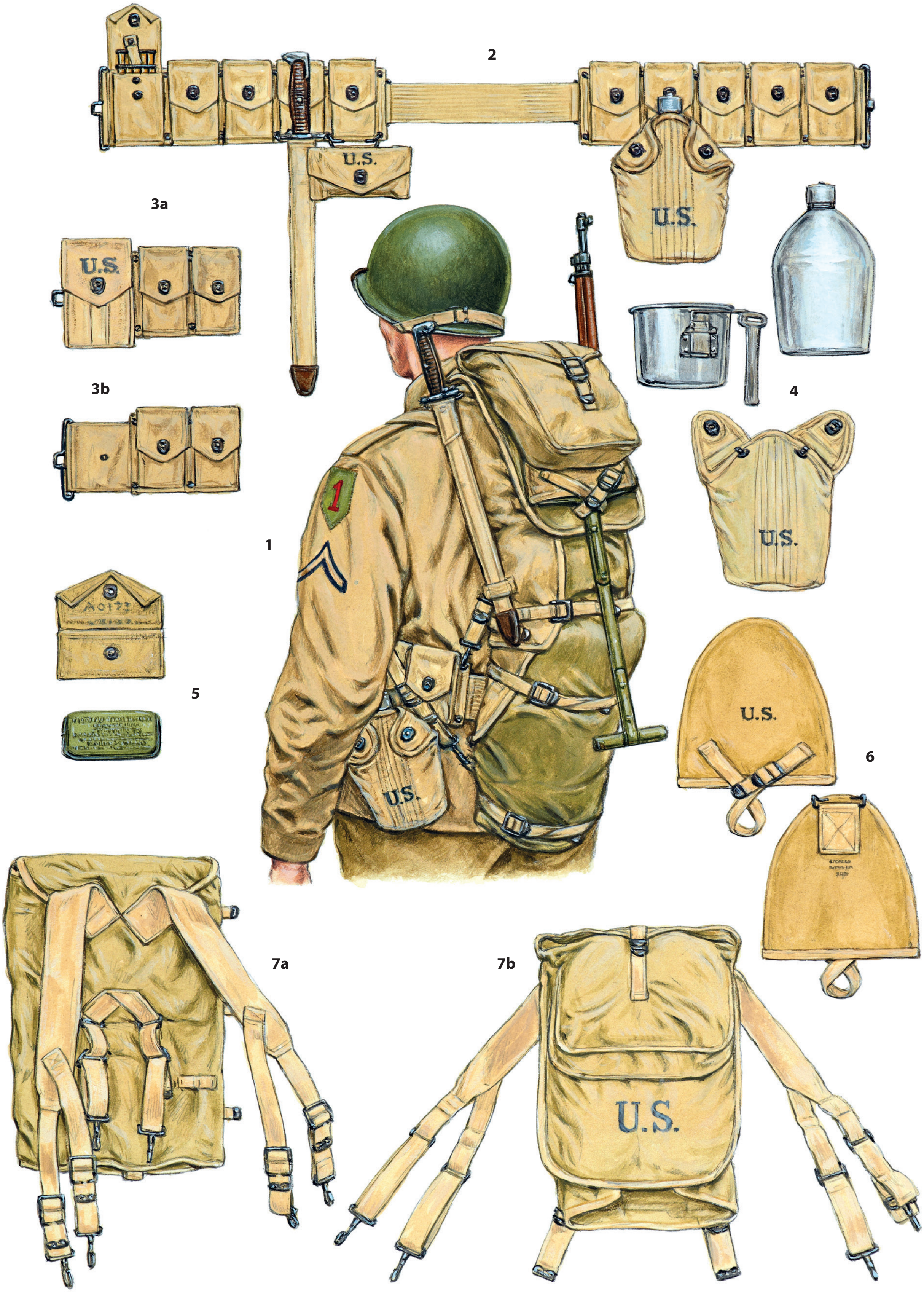
(3a & 3b) Left end of M1923 mounted cartridge belt; otherwise similar to the dismounted version, this lacked the left-end pocket, thus providing space for (3a) a detachable M1923 pocket for two magazines for the .45cal M1911A1 Colt pistol. The M1911A1 was used by the few remaining horse cavalry units, and by parachute units, since the latter were additionally armed with pistols until late 1944.

(4) Aluminum M1910 1-qt canteen with metal cap, canteen cup, and carrier.

(5) The M1924 first aid pouch was slightly longer than the M1910, to accommodate the new Carlisle first aid dressing in a rectangular brass can, as yet without a sulfa-powder packet.

(6) The M1910 entrenching shovel carrier was slightly modified in 1928, but this did not rate a designation change.

(7a & 7b) Front and back of the M1928 haversack without the bedroll or attachable entrenching tool and bayonet. In combat order the bedroll was often left with company transport. It can be seen that to carry the haversack it was necessary to attach its suspender straps to the M1923 cartridge, M1912/M1936 pistol, or M1937 BAR belt.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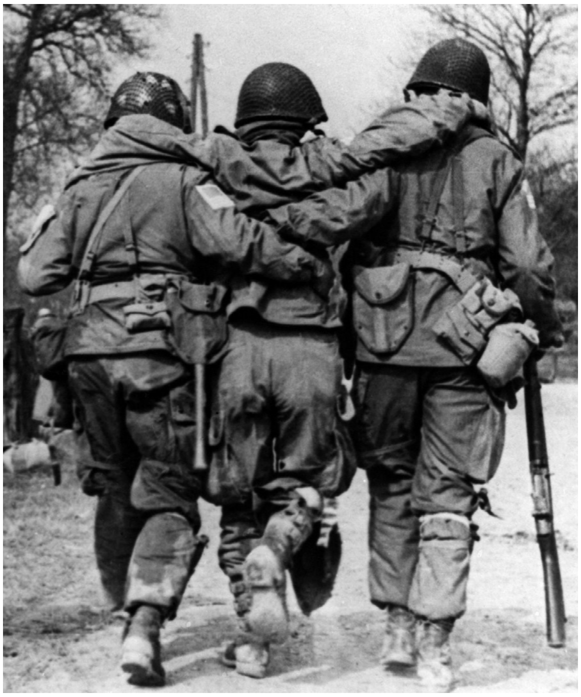


Another rear view, this time of paratroopers helping a wounded comrade. Each has the M1936 pistol belt and suspenders, M1910 canteen and cover, M1943 entrenching tool carrier, and late-war M1 carbine-and-rifle double magazine pockets, the latter identified by the fact that they have M1942 first aid pouches hooked below them – the earlier carbine pockets did not have eyelets allowing this. One man has lost his entrenching tool; this seems to have been fairly common, with tools left behind in unfinished positions when troops were ordered to advance quickly. The empty carriers might be pressed into service to carry other things, such as two K-ration packets. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

materials along with OD Shade No. 3 or Shade No. 7 components, resulting in the two- or even three-tone equipment that is called "transitional gear" by collectors. Such items might have, for instance, a tan body and OD flaps, retaining straps, and/or edge binding, or the reverse. It is often difficult to tell issued OD Shade No. 3 from the darker OD Shade No. 7.

There is a great deal of inconsistent and conflicting information regarding the introduction and use of OD shades. Items are often described as OD Shade No. 9 (tan) and Shade No. 7 (dark OD), with little or no mention of the short-lived OD Shade No. 3. There was also much variance between individual items made in the green OD Shade No. 3 and the darker OD Shade No. 7 owing to differences in fabric weave and density, dye batches, wear, weathering, and washing, which today makes it difficult to determine exactly what shade an item originally was. For the purposes of this book and to prevent confusion, OD Shade No. 9 will be referred to as "tan" and both OD Shade No. 3 and OD Shade No. 7 as "OD."

Helmets, entrenching tools, axes, and similar equipment were painted a dark green OD Shade No. 22, in use since 1920 and reaffirmed in July 1940 when responsibility for paint formulation and procurement was shifted from the Corps of Engineers to the Quartermaster Corps. Units frequently repainted helmets and equipment using different types and quantities of thinner, and manufacturers' formulas and batches differed, so OD shades on such items varied greatly. In this text the color of tools, helmets, etc. will simply be called "dark OD."

Markings

Most equipment items were marked with a conspicuous "U.S." or "US"; this was stamped in black on fabric items and impressed on metal items. At the least, most items were also marked with the manufacturer's abbreviation and the year. Other information might include the nomenclature, and stock, specification, and contract numbers. These might be marked directly on the item or on a black-on-white fabric tag.

World War II QM stock numbers consisted of a two-digit "class" code to identify the category of equipment; the initial letter of the first descriptive word in the official reversed nomenclature; and a two- to five-digit number identifying the item within that letter group. This last group of numbers was not sequential, and there were intentional gaps between the digits. Variants of an item or its similar replacement might be identified by a number of a value two to five higher. There might also be a second set with a two- to three-digit number identifying variants. Examples of standard numbering include the M1923 dismounted cartridge belt (74-B-160), M1923 double pistol magazine pocket (74-P-168), M1942 first aid packet pouch (74-P-260), and M1932 meat can (74-C-65). "Class 74" signifies "individual field equipment." Note that "B" in such a number may mean Bag, Belt, Binding, Bar, Band, etc.

Individual equipment item weights

The burden of a rifleman armed with an M1 rifle, two fragmentation grenades, 80 rounds of ammunition, another 48 rounds in a bandoleer, bayonet, entrenching tool, web equipment, clothing, shelter items, and one day's rations typically came to a weight of approximately 50 pounds. Often it was less than this, however, since spare clothing, bedding, and shelter items left in unit transport might lighten the load by as much as 30 pounds. Weights of the most commonly used items were as follows:

Item	Weight in lbs
M1923 dismounted cartridge belt	1.61
M1923 mounted cartridge belt	1.50
M1936 pistol or revolver belt	0.59
M1937 BAR magazine belt	1.88
M1936 suspenders	0.88
M1923 pistol magazine pocket	0.41
M1917 revolver ammunition pocket	0.10
M1 carbine magazine pocket	0.09
M1 carbine or rifle cartridge pocket	0.14
50-rd drum magazine carrier w/sling	0.62
5-pocket SMG magazine carrier	0.52
3-pocket SMG magazine carrier	0.31
3-pocket grenade carrier	0.68
M1916 pistol holster	0.59
M1910 1-qt canteen	0.47
Stainless steel 1-qt canteen	0.63
M1910 canteen cup	0.45
Stainless steel canteen cup	0.50
M1910 dismounted canteen cover	0.44
M1941 mounted canteen cover	0.56
M1932 meat can (mess kit)	0.84
M1942 meat can (mess kit)	0.97
M1926 knife, fork, & spoon	0.32
M1924 first aid pouch	0.30
M1942 first aid packet pouch	0.31
M1928 haversack & pack carrier	2.06
M1936 field bag (musette bag)	1.59
Rucksack	6
Combat field pack	1.75
Cargo field pack	1.25
Combat-and-cargo field pack suspenders	0.95
Barrack bag	0.50
Waterproof clothing bag	0.77
Duffle bag	2.33
M1934 wool blanket	4
Sleeping bag w/case	5.51
M1935 bedding roll	9.22
Lightweight poncho	1.81
Jungle hammock	6
New-type shelter half	4.25
Shelter-half accessories	2.50
M1910 entrenching tool w/carrier	3.83
M1943 entrenching tool w/carrier	3.42
M1910 entrenching pick-mattock	2.25
M1910 entrenching axe	1.25
M1938 wire cutter	0.87
M1939 22in machete w/sheath	1.95
M1942 18in machete w/sheath	2
M1905 bayonet w/M3 scabbard	1.45
M1 bayonet w/M7 scabbard	1.15
M3 trench knife w/M6 scabbard	0.75
M3 6x30 binoculars	1.37
M13 6x30 binoculars	1.40
M17 7x50 binoculars	3.25
M1938 lensatic compass	0.17
Liquid-filled wrist compass	0.15
K-ration (3x meals)	2.31
C-ration (3x meals)	5 approx.
D-ration bar	0.25

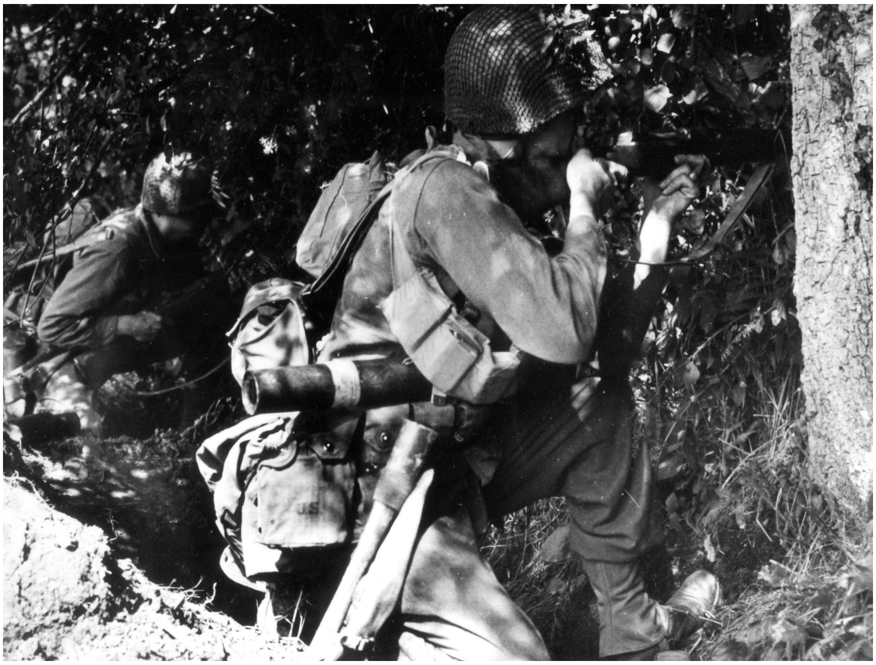
The Joint Army-Navy Catalog System's Federal Stock Number (FSN) 11-digit numeric code was used during 1949–75; however, many items produced during the Korean War retained their World War II QM stock numbers, so the presence of a QM number does not necessarily mean the item was produced in World War II. The FSN system was supplanted by the 13-digit National Stock Number (NSN) adopted in 1975 and still in use.

Individuals' names and units may also be found marked on items. Rather than complete eight-digit serial numbers, only the last four digits were used, prefixed by the initial of the soldier's last name.

Fabric and webbing

Most items were made from cotton canvas or duck, a heavy plain-woven

Typically non-standard mix of gear worn by a rifleman photographed in a hedgerow near Mortain, Normandy, in August 1944. He wears an M1936 "musette bag" slung to hang on his back below the upper component of an M1928 haversack. Note also the bazooka round in its cardboard packing tube stuck under the equipment on his right side, above a pick-mattock in its carrier; the rifle clip bandoleer; and a shelter half folded up and tucked into the back of his cartridge belt. (NARA)



fabric that was water-repellent and windproof. The threads were tightly woven, but it was not "waterproof" – that is, preventing water from soaking through. Waterproofing required special treatment, such as coating one or both sides with synthetic rubber. Different weights of canvas were used, to include coarsely woven duck for items expecting rougher treatment. Cotton webbing varied in thickness and width from extremely heavy belt materials

B

INFANTRYMAN'S EQUIPMENT, 1943–44

The rifleman's web gear had changed little apart from minor manufacturing details. It was now being made in darker green OD Shade No. 7, but manufacturers were directed to use up all remaining OD Shade No. 9 (tan) material, which resulted in some items being made from both materials.

(1) This corporal armed with a .30cal Garand M1 rifle has an M1923 dismounted cartridge belt, supporting a stainless steel canteen with M1910 cover, and (unseen at this angle) an M1942 first aid pouch. His M1943 field pack – a somewhat improved jungle pack made in OD Shade No. 7 rather than camouflage-pattern fabric – saw limited issue in Europe. An M1943 folding entrenching tool is attached at the back, and (hidden at this angle) an M1905 bayonet with black plastic grip in an M3 scabbard is on the left side.

(2) M1923 dismounted cartridge belt manufactured in mixed OD shades. The cartridge pockets, now holding one en bloc clip for the Garand rifle, no longer needed the internal snap-strap that had previously separated the two 5-rd charger clips for the M1903 Springfield, but were still being manufactured with it. The belt is supported by the M1936 suspenders, here with a Mk IIA1 fragmentation grenade clipped by its lever to the small D-ring on the front of the left shoulder. Hooked to the belt at the left end are an M1942 first aid pouch and an M3 trench knife in an M6 leather scabbard, and at the right end an M1942 enameled canteen with M1910 cover.

(3) The M1942 first aid pouch was slightly longer than the M1910 to accommodate larger field dressings. The red-painted finish of the "sardine can" container indicates that it includes a sulfa-powder envelope. Later, OD-painted cans were embossed on the back to indicate this – either "With Sulfanilamide" or "With Crystalline Sulfanilamide."

(4) The M1942 enameled-steel canteens and cups were soon withdrawn, as they rusted when chipped.

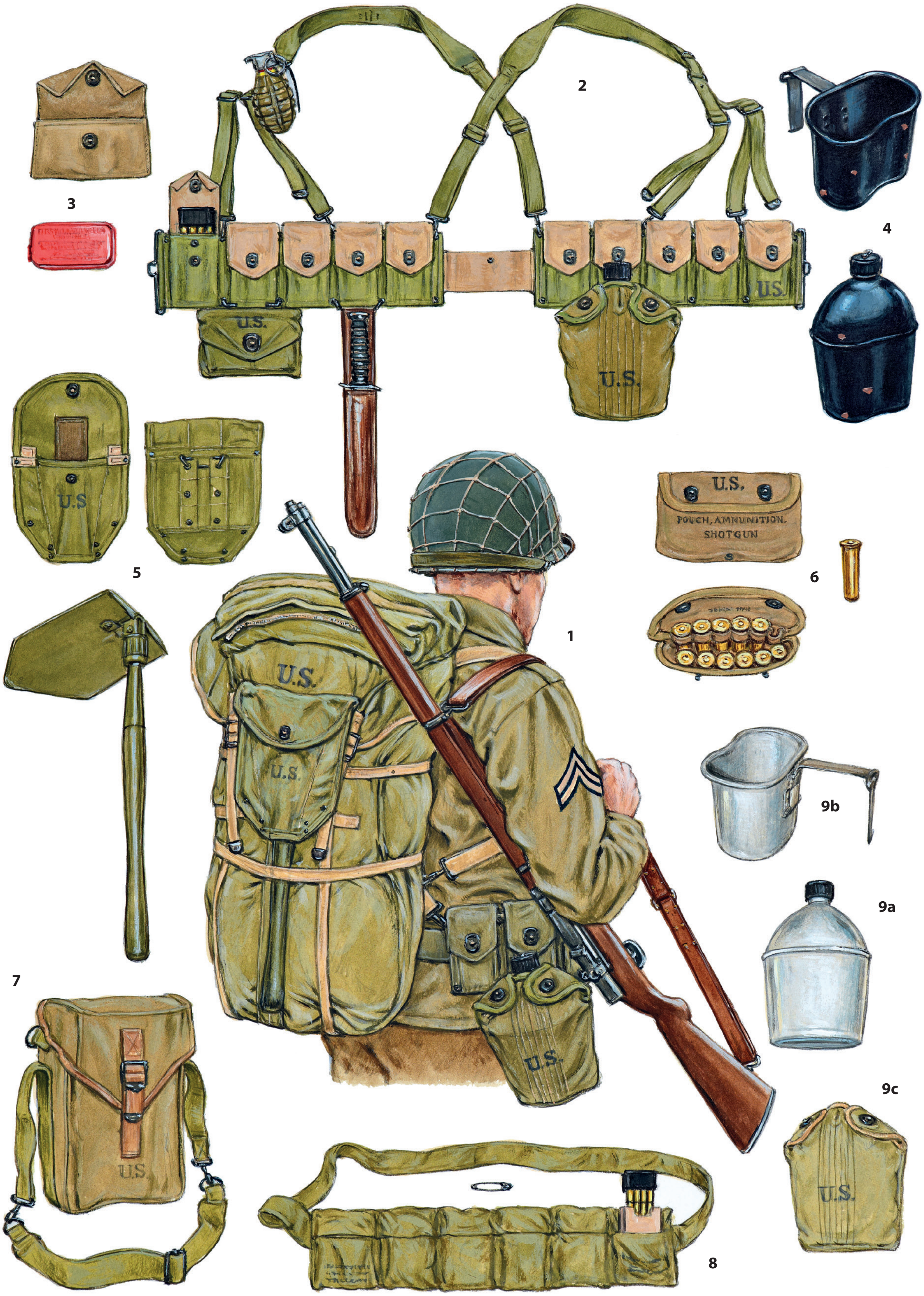
(5) The M1943 folding entrenching tool and carrier began to be issued in 1944. The double-hook on the back could be adjusted for height to fit better on different packs and belts. The tool is shown here with the head angled at 90° for use as a mattock.

(6) The shotgun ammunition pouch held 12 rounds of brass-cased 12-gauge ammunition.

(7) The ammunition carrying bag could accommodate 19 different types of munitions, and was manufactured in both OD No. 9 and No. 7 shades. Here it is fitted with a field-bag carrying strap with D-rings, which attached to the snaphooks on the ends of the bag's integral strap.

(8) The M1 Garand rifle ammunition bandoleer held 6x 8-rd clips (note cardboard protector shown at right). The same bandoleer was also issued with 12x 5-rd M1903 charger clips. The 2in safety pin was for taking up slack in the carrying strap.

(9a, 9b & 9c) Stainless steel 1-qt canteen with Bakelite cap, canteen cup, and M1910 cover.


2
3
4
5
U.S.
U.S.
U.S
U.S.
POUCH, AMMUNITION, SHOTGUN
6
1
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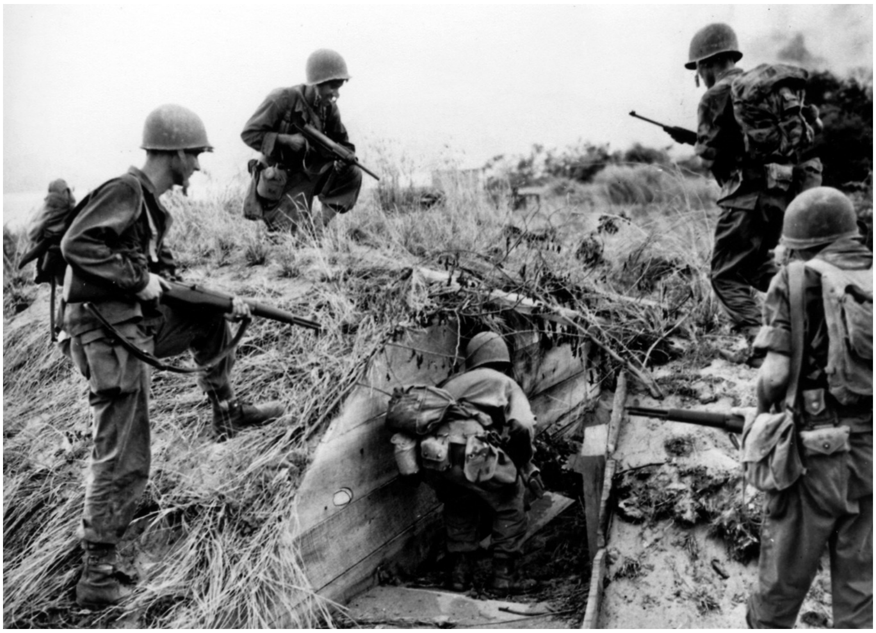
9c
U.S.
8



Infantrymen examining a bunker; no two of them wear the same arrangement of web gear. The GI at top left appears to have an ammunition carrying bag slung to hang at his hip behind his canteen; this may contain 30-rd magazines for his M3 "grease gun," for lack of a more appropriate carrier. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

to lightweight edge-binding. A principal use was for securing and carrying straps, reinforcing, hangers, and connecting webbing.

Webbing was susceptible to abrasion and could fray at tension points. It also absorbed water at a high rate – up to 40 percent its own weight – and was slow to dry. Frequent soaking and drying led to dry rot. It was also susceptible to high heat, deteriorating at only 300°F (149°C) and igniting at 410°F (210°C).

The wide use of canvas and webbing dated from the late-19th century efforts of Capt (later Brig Gen) Anson Mills (1834–1924). He found that the largely leather equipment in use in the 1870s offered poor service, and so in 1880, in partnership with Charles Gilbert, he established the Mills Woven Cartridge Belt Company in Worcester, Massachusetts. The US Army adopted his M1885 equipment and this eventually led to the M1910 equipment, from which much of the World War II gear evolved. (Mills retired from the service in 1897; the firm was struggling before US government orders for its M1903 cartridge-pocket belt assured its fortunes. While the British Army had trialed a Mills equipment during the Second Boer War (1899–1902), it was 1906 before collaboration between Mills' London factory and a Maj Arnold Burrowes led to a British order for 1,500 trials sets of what would become the Pattern 1908 Web Infantry Equipment.)

Leather

Cowhide leather was used for handgun holsters, various carrying cases – e.g., for binoculars and compasses – belts and straps, footwear, gloves, and for chaff pads and reinforcing to protect wear points on web gear.

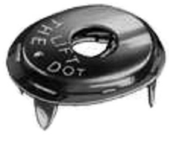
Black leather was used until about 1904, when brown and russet (a reddish brown) leather items became standard; they went better with OD and khaki uniforms and web equipment. Black, which went well with the old Army Blue, contrasted against khaki and the light OD shades of the new era, making the soldier more conspicuous. White cotton or linen thread was used as stitching on leather items; dyed thread was weaker and deteriorated faster

Lift-the-dot fastener

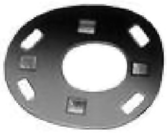
The lift-the-dot (LTD) fastener was developed by Fred S. Carr of the Carr Fastener Company in Cambridge, MA after it was founded in 1912; they were designed as heavy-duty fasteners for curtains on horse-drawn and horseless carriages. "Lift-The-Dot" was originally a trade name, also known as "Dot" fasteners. In 1929 the company merged with a competitor to become United-Carr Fastener Corporation. Numerous other companies produced LTD fasteners.

The original M1910 web equipment was fitted with small dome snap fasteners – these were called "eagle snaps," as they were embossed with the eagle of the US Coat of Arms. Initially, M1910 canteen covers had robust turnbuckle fasteners, but these were soon replaced by eagle snaps. The eagle snaps easily became unfastened, and with the mass production of equipment as well as the introduction of new items LTD fasteners were adopted in March 1917. Small dome snaps were still used on items requiring only light-duty securing. LTD fasteners remained the primary fasteners on web equipment until 1956.

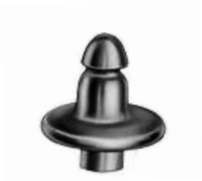
LTD fasteners were made of brass and black-oxidized. They consisted of four components. The *socket*, an oval-shaped plate fitted with a spring-wire locking ring, had four prongs; these fastened it through the fabric and bent to fix the *back plate* behind the fabric. The *stud* was a rounded post with an integral disc base; it was secured to the fabric by stamping it to a *washer* on the back side. The oval-shaped "doughnut" socket was marked with LIFT/THE ° DOT on its bottom portion. The wire ring clinched the stud by locking into a groove circling the post on three sides, and was less prone to be jammed by mud than a snap fastener. To open the LTD fastener, the flap or tab it is securing is pulled up from the bottom end, and this will lift the socket plate over the post. If tugged from either side or from the top it will not be lifted off the stud, owing to the wire locking on those sides.



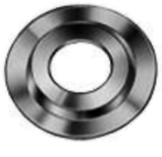
Socket



Back Plate



Stud



Washer

with age, and white thread darkened with use and polishing to become brown. Many leather items were russet, but shades could range from tan to dark brown. The use of leather declined through the war. It becomes stiff and cracked in dry-hot climates, deteriorates rapidly and attracts mold in the humid tropics, and is ill-suited for long-term storage.

Metal fittings ("hardware")

A wide variety of metal fittings and components were used in combat equipments. The most common materials were bronze and steel; secondary materials were galvanized steel, brass, zinc, and alloys. Most metal fittings were black-lacquered or chemically blackened with selenium dioxide – aka "black oxidized." Blacking often rubbed off with use and was seldom reapplied, as it then got on the web gear.

Metal fittings included: LTD fasteners (see panel above, with illustrations), snaps (officially, "dome fasteners"), buttons, rivets, eyelets, grommets, suspension rings (D-rings, V-rings, rectangular rings), hangers, swivels, snaphooks, adjusters, adapters, belt loops, buckles (tongue or tongueless bar buckles, friction buckles with sliding toothed or untoothed bars), and tip protectors (rounded or squared) for strap ends.

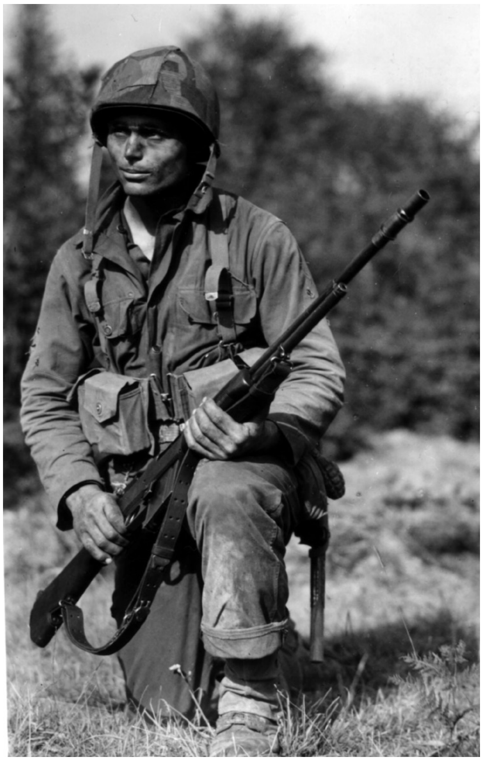
An important fitting was the double-hook introduced in 1907 and widely used on M1910 and later equipment. This was a heavy-gauge wire hook affair secured to equipment carriers, cases, pouches, pockets, scabbards, etc., usually by heavy 2in-wide webbing hangers with eyelets, stitched or riveted to the item. Double-hooks were fastened to pairs of eyelets on belts and on equipment tabs sewn to packs. The hooks were difficult to attach, but thus had the advantage of seldom coming unfastened accidentally. The modern two-way zipper – officially called a slide-fastener – had been perfected in 1913. It came into widespread use in the 1930s, and proliferated during World War II.

Canteens and cups, mess kits, and eating utensils were mostly made of aluminum or stainless steel, redesignated corrosion-resistant steel in 1944. Canteen caps, grips for knives and machetes, and waterproof match boxes were some of the items commonly made from Bakelite. This thermosetting phenol formaldehyde resin, or early plastic, was durable and did not conduct electricity. (Cellulose, acetate, and vinyl plastics were then in their infancy, lacked strength and durability, and were susceptible to temperature extremes.)

BASIC EQUIPMENT

The equipment described in this chapter was common to most combat troops and formed the "foundation" for their equipment. It provided a means of carrying ammunition, water, first aid items, bayonet, and tools. Most backpacks of the period required a belt to be worn, to which their integral shoulder straps attached.

Standard wear of attached items called for the first aid pouch to be under the fourth pocket on the left, or the fifth pocket if the bayonet was carried under the third pocket. The canteen could be under the fourth or fifth right-side pocket depending on waist size. Later in the war it was directed that the first aid pouch be moved to the right side. In practice, soldiers attached equipment wherever it was convenient.



The M1937 BAR rifleman's magazine belt, worn here by a 2nd Inf Div soldier who was said to have killed 27 Germans. As usual, he has removed the weapon's bipod to save weight; more intriguingly, he seems to have stretched a German splinter-camouflage helmet cover over his M1 "pot." Each 12-man rifle squad possessed one M1918A2 BAR, but some squads managed to acquire a second. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

Belts

Foot troops armed with the .30cal M1903-series Springfield bolt-action and M1 Garand semiautomatic rifles received an **M1923 dismounted cartridge belt.**[2] This was a three-part assembly: two pocket sections and the connecting rear adjusting strap, with friction adapters and web loops. Small eyelets were set between each pocket along the top and bottom edges, the upper row for attaching suspenders and pack straps and the lower for equipment items. Each pocket section had five 4in x 2½in clip pockets with a 5in-long internal clip-securing strap. Two Springfield 5-rd charger clips were held in each pocket, with the front clip points up and secured by the strap, and the second clip behind it points down. This allowed 100 rds in 20 clips to be carried.

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[2] Springfield rifles were still issued to some service units into 1945. Rifle squads retained an M1903 until late 1943 for grenade launching, as grenade launchers were not available for the M1 rifle until then.

GI slang for field gear

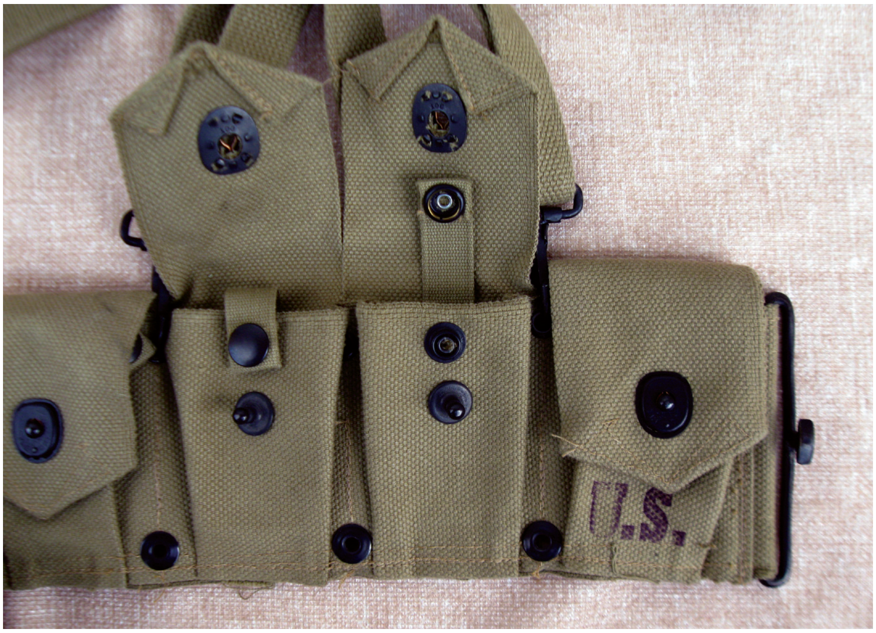
Regardless of official nomenclature, GIs were notorious for bestowing slang or simplified terms on equipment.

Official nomenclature	*Slang term*
ammunition carrying bag	general-purpose or GP pouch, ammo or grenade bag
bayonet	pig-, frog- or toad-sticker; toothpick, cat-stabber, or cheese-toaster
bedding roll	horseshoe or blanket roll
Carlisle field dressing container	sardine can
crystalline sulfanilamide	sulfa powder
five-color camouflage pattern	frog-skin or arbor pattern
individual equipment	web gear
M1936 field bag	musette bag
M1916 pistol holster	hip flask
M1942 1-qt canteen	enamel canteen
meat can	mess kit
meat can body	mess kit pan or skillet
meat can lid	mess kit plate
plastic 1-qt canteen	ethocel canteen
pocket (for ammunition)	ammo pouch
2-qt collapsible canteen	jungle or Flexo canteen
rifle clip holder	Air Corps pouch
M6 rocket carrying bag	bazooka rocket bag
shelter-half tent	pup tent
sleeping bag	snore or fart sack, flea bag
sulfanilamide tablets	sulfa tabs, or insufferable pills
tent pin	tent peg or stake
three-pocket grenade carrier	grenade pouch
wool blanket	army or GI blanket
wool sleeping bag	mummy bag

For the Garand, a single 8-rd clip was inserted points down, for 80 rds in all. The belt was buckled by a male T-fastener on the right end and a female U-fastener on the left.

Another version was the M1923 **mounted** cartridge belt. In place of the left front clip pocket was a web panel with a female snap. Any model of two-cell pistol magazine pocket could be slipped on and secured to this by a male snap on its back. A three-compartment M1917 revolver ammunition pocket could also be fitted. Besides the cavalry, the mounted belt was issued to the rare rifle-and-pistol-armed dismounted troops. Paratroopers were issued mounted belts as they were also authorized pistols (other than medical aidmen and cooks). The general issue of pistols to paratroopers was rescinded in February 1944, though troopers who already had them sometimes retained them.

A rifle squad's .30cal M1918A2 BAR gunner carried an **M1937 BAR magazine belt** which replaced a series of specialized M1918 BAR belts for the gunner, 2nd (assistant) gunner, and ammunition bearer. The M1937 comprised left and right magazine pocket sections – three 5in x 3½in x 2in pockets each – and a back-adjusting belt, with the T- and U-fastener buckle.



The right-hand end of the M1923 dismounted cartridge belt. The two open pockets show the clip-retaining straps for use when the pocket contained two 5-rd charger clips for the M1903 Springfield rifle. Although these snap-straps were unnecessary for the single 8-rd *en bloc* clip of the M1 Garand, belts continued to be made with this feature until 1949. (Corey Helweg Collection)

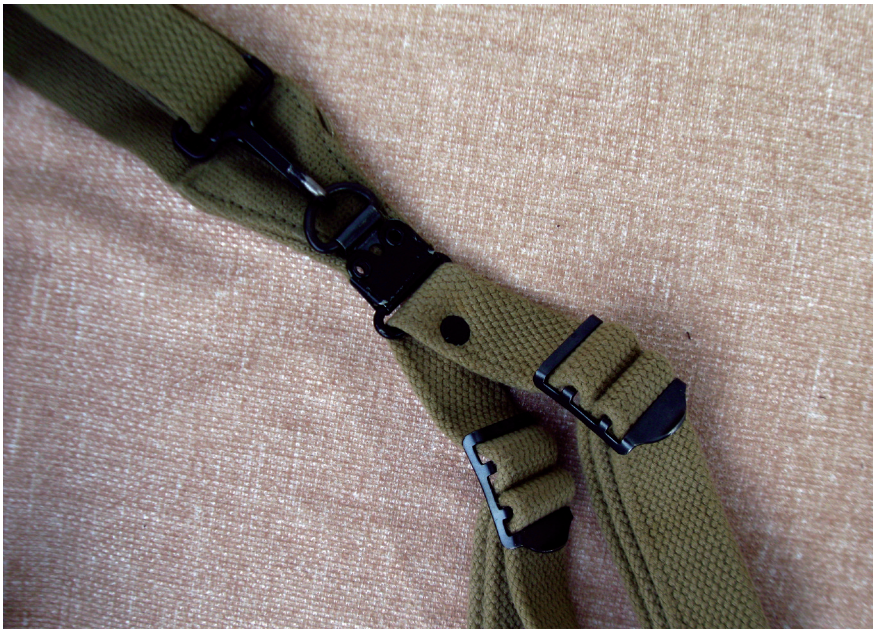
Suspender eyelets were positioned along the belt's top edge, and double-hook eyelets were fitted to the pocket bottoms. Rather than 12x 20-rd magazines, only 8 were carried owing to the weight; the loaded BAR weighed 20.84lbs and 8 magazines added 11.52 pounds. The other two pockets held cleaning materials, an M1918 leather spare-parts case, a magazine loader (adapted to allow 5-rd M1903 charger clips to be loaded into magazines), and an oil can.

The M1936 pistol or revolver belt – simply the **"pistol belt"** – was a heavy-duty web belt with three rows of eyelets. The top row was for suspenders/shoulder straps, and the bottom for equipment. The center row was for the length-adjusting hook on the belt's free end, doubled back through the right-end T-fastener with one or two (early issue) slide keepers. Pistol belts were issued to troops armed with handguns, carbines, or SMGs, as well as to unarmed troops (e.g., medical personnel, chaplains, and WACs).

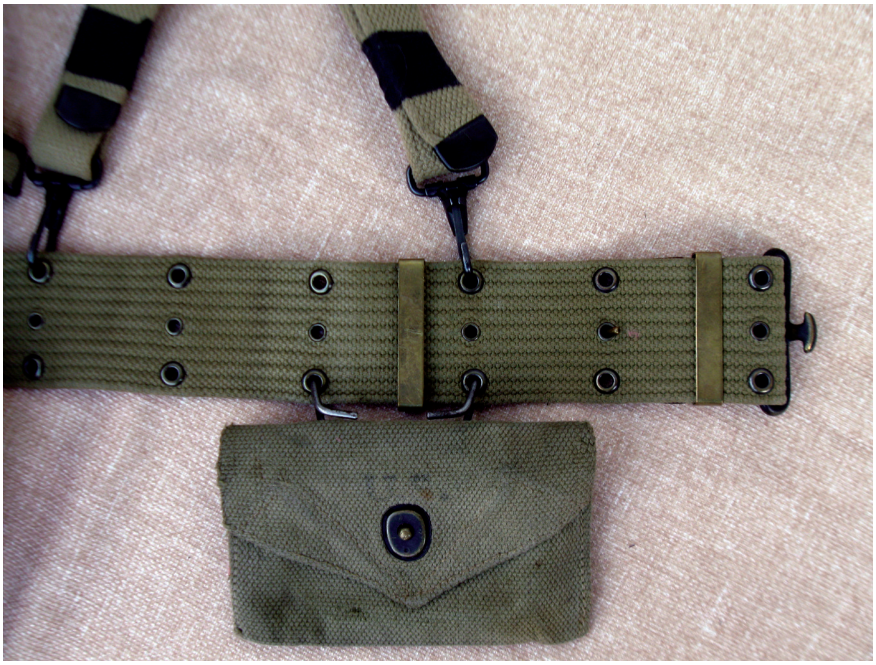
The **M1936 suspenders** were developed as a component of an arrangement with the M1936 pistol belt and M1936 musette bag. Units equipped with the musette bag as their backpack were issued suspenders, while other units with the M1928 haversack relied on its integral shoulder straps as suspenders. BAR gunners were provided suspenders to help support their heavily laden belt, as were troops armed with the M1 rifle. The X-back design had two snaphooks at the end of the back straps for attaching to the rear of the belt. A pair of small V-straps with snaphooks branched off each shoulder strap at the front; the innermost straps were clipped to the front of the belt, and the longer outer straps to the sides. If the musette bag was attached to the shoulder straps, the two outermost straps were instead clipped to the D-rings on the bag's lower back. On the front of the suspenders above the junction of the V-straps were small D-rings, to take the snaphooks of the shoulder straps carried over from the upper part of the field bag.

Ammunition pockets and carriers

The different magazines and clips for a wide variety of weapons required unique means of carriage. What are often called "ammunition pouches" are



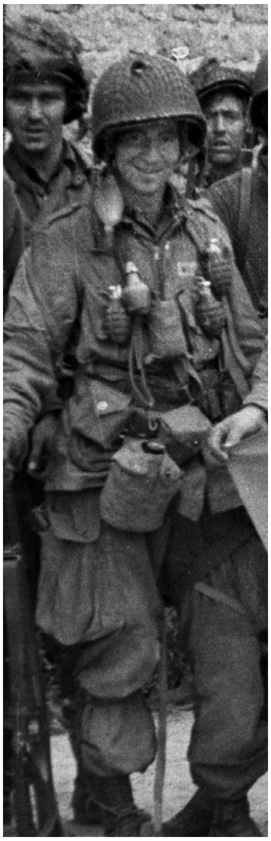
The upper front part of the M1936 suspenders, showing the separation of the V-straps and the adjustment buckles of the front straps, and, passing over the shoulder from the rear, the snaphook-end of a strap from an M1936 musette bag engaged with the D-ring on the front of the suspenders. (Corey Helweg Collection)



The right-hand end of the M1936 pistol belt, with an M1924 first aid pouch attached by a double-hook, and the V-straps and snaphooks of the M1936 "X-back" suspenders, the loose ends from the adjustment buckles fastened down with black friction tape. The belt's two bronze "keepers" have had the blacking rubbed off through use, as is common. Just visible in the second centerline eyelet from the end is the tip of the length-adjusting hook pushed through from behind. (Corey Helweg Collection)

formally referred to as "magazine pockets." The designation can be confusing: for example, what is called the "magazine pocket" may incorporate two to five individual magazine "cells." Other terms include "cases" and "clip holders."

Three types of two-cell magazine pockets were used for .45cal M1911A1 Colt **pistols**. All three had wide fabric belt loops on the back, and a male snap for attachment to the left front of pistol or mounted cartridge belts. The common M1923 web double pistol magazine pocket had an LTD fastener on the V-shaped flap, the LTD post being fitted to a metal bracket between the two cells. The M1918 pistol magazine pocket had a rounded flap secured by



This grenade-draped paratrooper has one of the square-looking rifle clip holders – aka "Air Corps pouches" – each side of the canteen hooked to the front of his pistol belt. These held either four M1 rifle clips or four 15-rd magazines for the M1A1 carbine, and were used only by paratroopers. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

two LTD fasteners, one on each magazine cell (though a version was also made with a V-shaped flap), and the cell bottoms were "puckered." The "M1912" web double magazine pocket, while adopted in 1912, did not officially bear that designation. It was of similar design to the M1918, but had two small eagle snaps on the fully woven flap (no edge binding) of a blunt V-shape; from 1917, two LTD fasteners replaced the snaps. There were also special leather versions for Military Police (MPs) and general officers.

The M1917 revolver ammunition pocket had three compartments, one above the other, each with two cells holding a 3-rd "half-moon clip," to hold 18 rounds. Some use was made of .45cal M1917 Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers by some remaining mounted cavalry units, tank units, MPs, service units, and others, owing to shortages of M1911A1 pistols, but few M1917s saw overseas service in World War II. They were attached to the M1936 pistol or revolver belt in the same manner as pistol magazine pockets.

The M1 **carbine** web double magazine pocket was adopted in 1942 to hold two 15-rd magazines for the .30cal M1 carbine.[3] It had a rounded flap with an LTD fastener stud attached to a short length of webbing sewn horizontally across the front of the cells. (Instead of a carbine magazine, each cell could alternatively hold one 8-rd M1 rifle clip, but it was a tight fit, and sometimes impossible.) On the back were a full-width canvas belt loop and a male snap for attachment to the M1936 pistol belt. There were often shortages of magazines and/or pockets, and one or two 50-rd cartons of ammunition would be carried to reload the available magazines.

Since most carbine-armed soldiers needed more than one pocket, the others were simply slid onto the belt and held in place by friction; troops were issued one to five pockets depending on their branch:

(1 pocket = 30 rds) Army Air Forces, Medical, Ordnance, Transportation, and Quartermaster
(2 = 60 rds) Adjutant General, Antiaircraft Artillery, Chemical, Coast Artillery, Engineer, Field Artillery, Infantry (including armored infantry), Military Police, Railroad, Signal, and Tank Destroyer
(3 = 90 rds) Armor
(4 = 120 rds) Parachute and glider infantry and artillery units
(5 = 150 rds) Cavalry (mechanized or horse-mounted).

It was fairly common for a pocket to be slid onto the right side of the M1 carbine's buttstock for rapidly accessible spare magazines. The carbine had to be disassembled to do so; the pocket was not designed with this in mind, and the possibility was inadvertently discovered by an inquisitive soldier. The pocket would not fit on an M1A1 carbine's folding stock.

The M1 **carbine or rifle cartridge pocket** adopted in 1943 was similar to the earlier model, but the two cells were slightly larger so they could accommodate an M1 rifle clip. The upper portion of the pockets had a layer of reinforcing fabric, and there were two narrow web belt loops on the back. On the bottom edge were two eyelets to allow the attachment of small equipment items with double-hooks, such as first aid or compass pouches. This type of pocket did not fit on the carbine stock. The pocket was modified to accept M1 rifle clips as it was under consideration to replace the M1923 cartridge belt with the M1936 pistol belt fitted with four or more of these

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[3] The .30cal carbine cartridge was much shorter than the .30-06 round used in M1 and M1903 rifles, BARs, and machine guns: 33mm, with a straight case, as opposed to a 63mm bottlenecked case.

British-made US web gear

British firms were contracted to produce equivalents of US equipment under the War Aid Programme, a form of "reverse Lend-Lease." They were marked as BRITISH MADE, and often bore the British War Department (formerly Board of Ordnance) broad arrowhead mark. Items might be marked with "U.S.," but many were not. While similar to standard-issue US items they differed in construction details, fabric/webbing weave, hardware (metal fittings), and exact dimensions. The British-made items were compatible with US-made gear, allowing both to be mixed in use (as they often were).

Especially noticeable was the different construction of closure flaps from US-made items. Heavier woven webbing was used in some items rather than the lighter canvas on US items. The gear items were mostly in a tan shade similar to the US OD Shade No. 9, but could be found ranging from tan to light brown to a pea-green. The hardware was sometimes of different design, the same as used on British Pattern 1937 web equipment; simple snap fasteners were used instead of lift-the-dot fasteners in some instances. British-made items included:

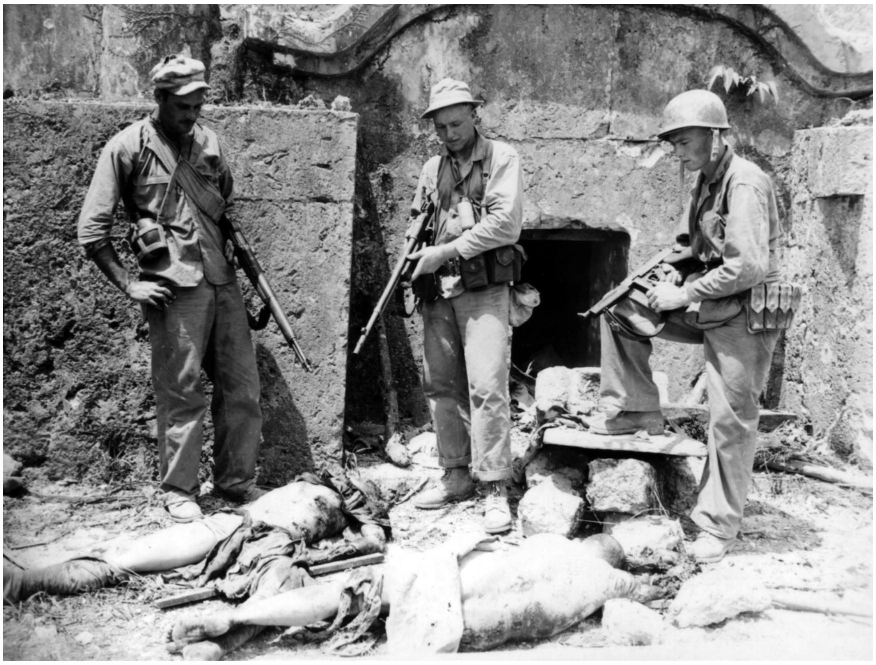
M1928 haversack & pack carrier
M1936 field bag (musette bag)
M1936 suspenders
Field-bag carrying strap
M1923 dismounted cartridge belt
M1936 pistol or revolver belt
M1918/1937 BAR magazine belt
"M1912" & M1923 pistol magazine pockets
M1 carbine magazine pocket (old style)
50-rd SMG drum carrier w/shoulder strap
30-rd SMG magazine case w/shoulder strap
M1910 dismounted canteen cover
M1917 & M1941 mounted canteen covers
M1924 & M1942 first aid pouches
M1938 dispatch case
M1910 entrenching shovel carrier
M1910 entrenching pick-mattock carrier
M1910 entrenching axe carrier
M1942 18in machete sheath
M1938 wire-cutter carrier (two versions)
M6 rocket carrying bag
Ammunition carrying bag
Machine gun & ammunition carrying sling
Duffle bag

pockets for troops armed with either M1 carbines or M1 rifles. In August 1944 this was authorized in parachute units, and each man armed with an M1 rifle was issued four pockets (a total of 64 rds) and an M1936 pistol belt in lieu of the M1923 cartridge belt. This allowed the belt to be better fitted to accommodate the parachute harness, as the location of the pockets could be adjusted. Not all parachute units adopted this system, some retaining M1923 cartridge belts.

The selective-fire M2 carbine was standardized in September 1944, but very few saw combat, on Luzon in the Philippines just before the Japanese surrender. They were issued with 15-rd magazines as 30-rd magazine production was delayed, and the 30-rd carbine magazine pocket for four magazines was not adopted until 1947. Conversion of M1s to M2s began in Europe and was completed in May 1945, at the time of VE-Day.

The US Army used three primary models of .45cal **submachine guns** during the war. The M1928A1 Thompson, in use since 1932, used 20-rd box and 50-rd drum magazines. The M1 and M1A1 Thompsons, both of which were fielded in 1943, were issued with 30-rd box magazines. They could also accept the M1928A1's 20-rd magazines, but not the drum; the M1928A1, which remained in limited use, could accept the 30-rd magazine. The M3 "grease gun" was fielded in mid-1944. It had a more robustly constructed 30-rd magazine that would not fit in Thompsons, nor could any Thompson magazines be used in the M3. The M3A1 was standardized in December 1944, but did not see wartime service.

The 50-round drum magazine carrier was a rectangular pouch measuring 9½in wide x 8½in high x 1½in deep, with a rounded flap secured by an LTD



Troops mopping up on Okinawa, 1945. The right-hand man has an M1A1 Thompson SMG, and a five-pocket carrier for its 20-rd magazines. The rifleman on the left has only a bandoleer, with 48 rds for his M1 Garand; slung to his right hip is a captured Japanese canteen – it was not uncommon for American soldiers to augment their personal equipment with captured items. Note that the BAR gunner in the center carries an M15 White Phosphorus smoke grenade clipped to his suspenders. (Tom Laemlein/ Armor Plate Press)

fastener. Web reinforcing was sewn round the sides and bottom. It was carried by an adjustable, detachable shoulder sling, whose middle portion was wider than the ends, and it had a wide belt loop on the back. Prewar carriers, which were acquired from commercial stocks, lacked the sling and were carried only on the belt – which was awkward, owing to the weight of the magazine without the support that a sling would have provided. The 50-rd drum was unpopular; it was heavy, at 4¾lbs loaded (almost half the weight of the gun itself), slow to fill with cartridges, prone to jamming, and it rattled. The drums were mainly issued as on-vehicle equipment in tanks, halftracks, and scout cars. They were phased out in 1942–43, though they were occasionally seen later.

The 30-round-magazine case with shoulder strap was an 8¾in x 5¾in x 2in case holding six 30-rd box magazines; 20-rd Thompson magazines could be carried if the five-pocket carrier (see below) was not available. It had a squared top flap secured by an LTD fastener. On the upper back was an inch-wide non-detachable, adjustable shoulder strap. There was no belt attachment, nor any internal dividers; this lack caused magazines to rattle, but it also allowed other ammunition items to be carried. Adopted in 1942, the case was supplemented in 1943 by the ammunition carrying bag, but remained in use. It appears that from 1943 the case was made an inch deeper to accommodate the longer magazines of the M3 “grease gun.”

Each cell of the five-pocket submachine gun magazine carrier had a separate V-shaped flap with an LTD fastener, and held a 20-rd magazine for the M1928A1 Thompson. On the back was a nearly full-width web belt loop. When M1/M1A1 Thompsons with 30-rd magazines began to be issued in 1943, 30-rd magazine carriers were not always available, so 30-rd magazines were inserted in this carrier protruding about 2¾in, with the flap displaced to one side and the LTD fastener snapped; this held the magazine in place by friction.

The three-pocket submachine gun magazine carrier was of similar design to the five-pocket carrier, but made of a lighter fabric. It had a wide fabric belt loop on the upper back. It was intended to hold three 30-rd magazines for the M1, M1A1, or M3 SMGs, but some were made with the pockets too small for the thicker M1/M1A1 Thompson magazines and only accepted the M3 type.

The **rifle clip holder (short)** was a single-cell rectangular pouch of duck fabric, with a V-shaped flap and LTD fastener and a wide canvas belt loop on the back. Known as the "Air Corps pouch," it held four 8-rd clips for the M1 rifle, or four 15-rd magazines for the M1A1 carbine, or two 15-rd magazines and a 50-rd carton of carbine cartridges, or seven 5-rd charger clips for the M1903 rifle. It was used by many parachute units, two to six holders being fitted to an M1936 pistol belt. The advantage over the M1923 cartridge belt was that holders could be positioned on the belt to accommodate the positioning of parachute harness straps; also, in just four holders a trooper could carry 16 rifle clips, as opposed to ten in the M1923 mounted belt. Clips and magazines easily fell from this pouch if it was not snapped shut again after removing one. It appears to have mostly disappeared from use by late 1944, being replaced by the M1 carbine-or-rifle cartridge pocket (see above).

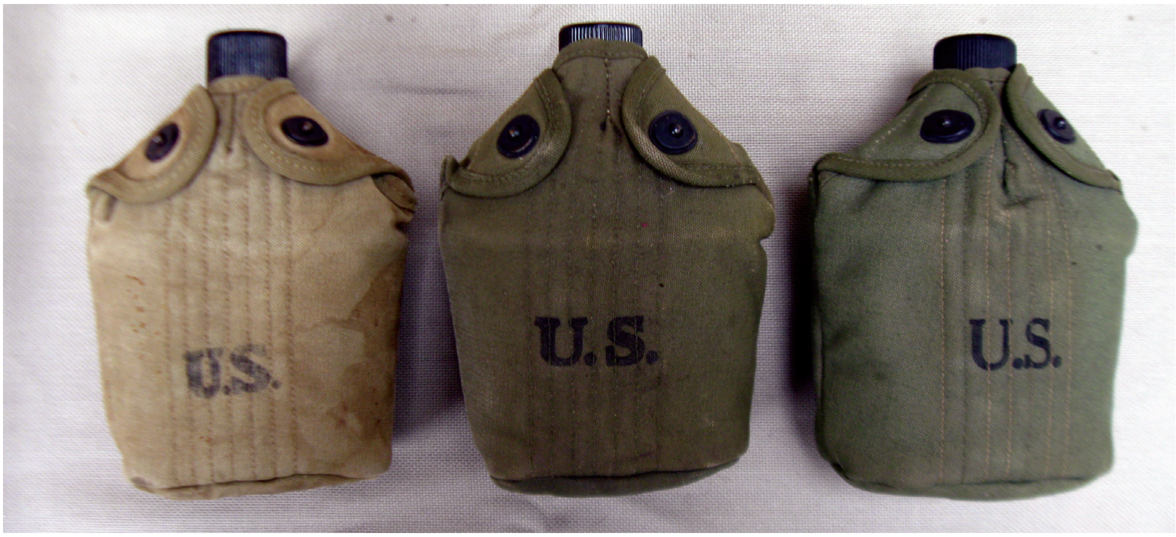
There was also a **submachine gun clip holder** similar to the rifle clip holder, but 6¼in deep to accommodate four 20-rd magazines for the M1928A1 Thompson submachine gun. There were no internal dividers and the magazines rattled, but the fit was tight. (It was technically incorrect to designate it as a "clip holder," as magazines are not properly called "clips.")

The **shotgun ammunition pouch** was a rectangular canvas pouch with two LTD fasteners securing the front flap, and two web belt loops on the back. It held 12x 12-gauge shotshells in web loops sewn to the front and back inside surfaces, thus giving two or three reloads for riot-type shotguns with 4- or 5-rd tubular magazines. (In World War II, "riot-type" shotguns were defined as having a 20in cylinder barrel – i.e. with no choke – and might or might not have a ventilated barrel guard, bayonet lug, or sling swivels. Guns provided with these features were designated "trench guns" in World War I, and the term was still often used.) Riot-type guns were mainly used by MPs guarding prisoners, but did see limited use on patrols and in close-assault actions, more commonly in the Pacific Theater. This pouch is often incorrectly referred to as the "M1938."

Canteens, cups and covers

All 1-qt (32 fl oz or 0.94-liter) canteens were of the same basic design, with a kidney-shaped cross-section and concave back. Canteen cups were designed for canteens to nest into them, both fitting inside the cover. The M1910 canteen had a metal cap; black Bakelite caps with cork gaskets were adopted in 1942, and were used on all canteens to include the M1910 produced after 1942. Bakelite caps did not freeze as readily as metal, and did not conduct heat into the canteen in hot climates. Early Bakelite caps were flat-topped, but most had recessed tops from late 1943. All caps had a retaining chain attached to a screw or rivet on the top and to a ring or band around the neck of the canteen. Normal issue was one canteen per man, but from late 1944 combat troops in some areas received two.

The original M1910 1-quart canteen remained standard throughout World War II. It was of one-piece construction, being made of lathe-spun aluminum. In 1913 a cheaper two-piece construction had been used, with the front and back welded together. In 1941 aluminum was temporarily restricted from canteen manufacturing, but aluminum M1910 production resumed in



Stainless steel 1-qt canteens with M1910 covers in, from left to right: OD Shade No 9 ("tan"); OD Shade No. 7; and OD Shade No. 3, which replaced Shade No. 9 and was in its turn replaced by the darker Shade No. 7. (Corey Helweg Collection)

1943; in the interim some canteens were made from tin- or zinc-plated steel, but the plating would partly wear off.

The M1942 1-quart canteen was made of low-grade steel and coated inside and out with black, medium blue-gray, or medium blue porcelain enamel in order to conserve stocks of aluminum and stainless steel. These "enamel canteens" proved defective; the enamel easily chipped and flaked inside and out with even routine use, and the exposed steel body rusted to contaminate the water. These canteens and accompanying cups were made only in 1942 and were soon withdrawn.

C

INFANTRYMAN, 1944–45

The M1928 haversack, M1936 musette bag, and M1943 field pack had all proved inadequate, and by now efforts were underway to provide a common field pack that would be suitable for all branches and duties. The new pack system saw limited issue in the last months of the war, and would remain standard for a decade.

(1) This sergeant assistant squad leader (with the patch of 4th Infantry Division just visible on the left shoulder of his herringbone twill shirt) has an M7 grenade launcher fitted to his M1 rifle. He is one of the few soldiers provided with the M1945 field pack system as the war drew to its close; it was outwardly similar to the "M1944," which was issued in extremely limited numbers. Suspenders attached to the belt were necessary for the carriage of this pack. The upper "combat" pack accommodated essential items such as rations, mess kit, toilet articles, blankets, etc.; the easily detachable "cargo" pack below it was for the shelter half, its accessories for bivouacking, and spare clothing. Attached externally are an M1943 folding entrenching tool, and, on the left, the short M1 bayonet in an M7 scabbard.

(2) The M15 grenade-launcher sight and its canvas case were issued from mid-1944 for use on the M1903 rifle, and on the M1 after the M7 grenade launcher became available for it late that year.

(3) The M1942 first aid pouch, also sometimes used as a compass carrier, was big enough to accommodate the new, larger field dressing in a cardboard carton (left). The carton was either wax-coated or packaged in cellophane to make it water- and gas-proof. Sulfa-powder packets were no longer issued after early 1944.

(4) The plastic or "ethocel" canteen was produced from 1942 to 1944, but it lacked durability and cracked in cold weather, so was withdrawn. Its aluminum canteen cup is shown with the handle locked down.

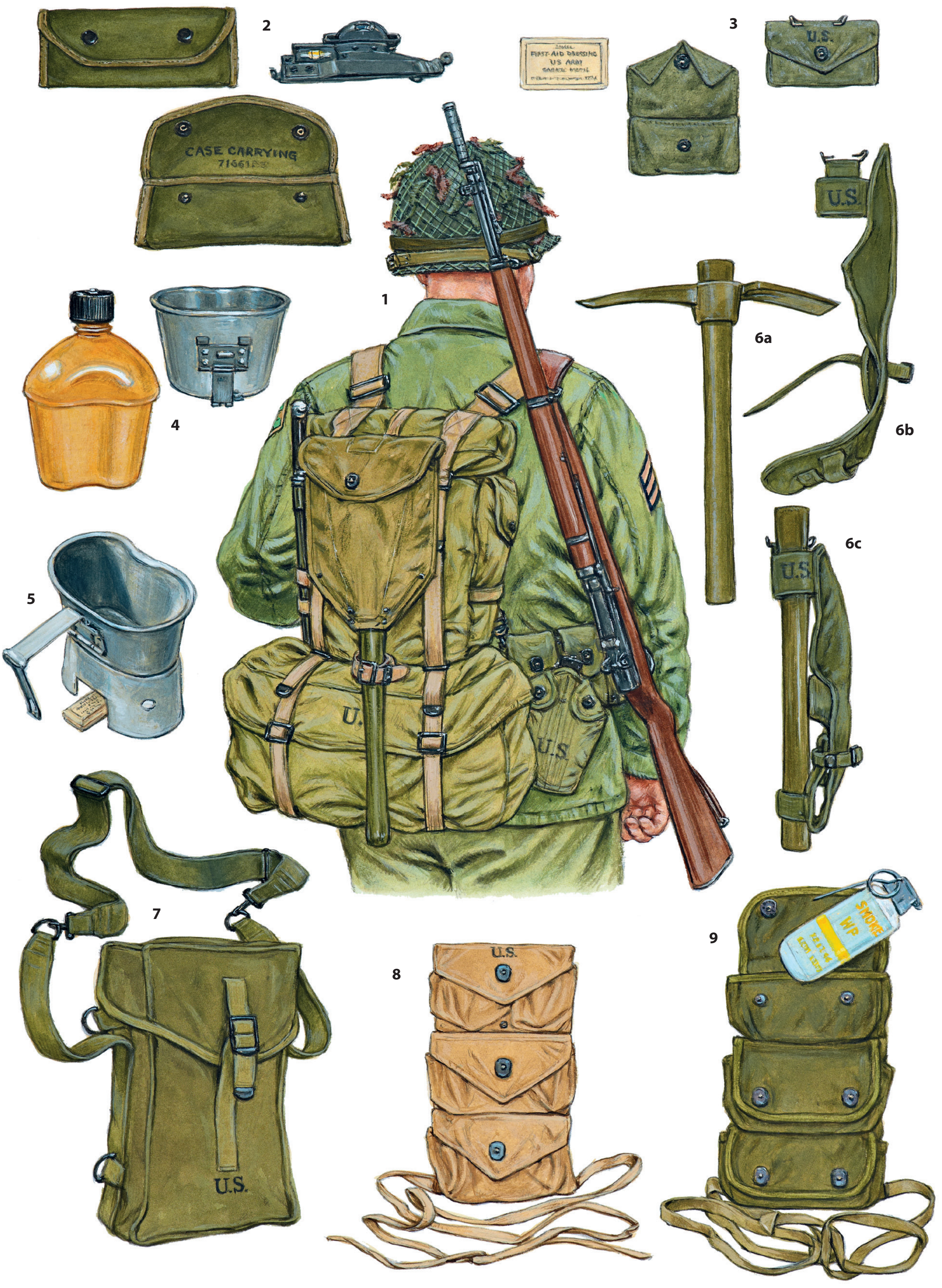
(5) Stainless steel canteen cup, handle extended, on a cup heating stand; this had the same "kidney" section as the cup, and five large round holes centered on its height were spaced along the far side and shoulders. The "Fuel-Tablet/Ration Heating/Size A," marked with black print on pale buff, came in a carton of four break-off 2in x 1½ in x ½in tablets.

(6a, 6b & 6c) The M1910 pick-mattock is shown assembled, with its M1910 carrier, and disassembled in the carrier.

(7) The new ammunition carrying bag of 1944 differed from the earlier model in that it had D-rings on its integral strap ends, and the new general-purpose carrying strap had snaphooks.

(8) The early-issue three-pocket grenade carrier held fragmentation grenades only.

(9) The later three-pocket grenade carrier was enlarged to hold the longer smoke and chemical grenades, such as the M15 White Phosphorus smoke grenade illustrated.

2
3
CASE CARRYING
SMALL
FIRST-AID DRESSING
US ARMY
U.S.
1
4
6a
6b
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U.S.
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SMOKE
WP
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U.S.
U.S.

The plastic 1-quart canteen produced during 1942–44 was known as the "ethocel canteen," derived from the material's formal name. This opaque light yellowish-brown plastic cracked in extreme cold, and could not be heated on a fire. The canteen had a two-piece body, top and bottom. Developed as a lighter weight, lower cost (and quieter) alternative to stainless steel and aluminum canteens, it was withdrawn at the war's end.

The stainless steel 1-quart canteen was another new design adopted in 1942 to supplement other models. It had a welded two-piece body with a noticeable raised rim between the top and bottom. It also had a duller finish than aluminum canteens, though some of these were actually made of dulled aluminum. Soon redesignated the "corrosion resistant steel canteen," it was not given a year designation, but is often mistakenly called an "M1910" or "M1942."

Filled to the brim, **canteen cups** held 24 fluid ounces – three 8 fl oz measuring cups or 1½ pints (0.70 liter). They had a hinged, L-shaped, flat steel handle that folded down under the cup, and when unfolded was locked in place by a sliding latch attached to the cup by four rivets. At the angle of the 90° "L" was a slot, into which the M1926 fork could be inserted to lift the cup off a fire if the handle was too hot. The slot also allowed the cup to be slipped onto the mess kit handle, allowing them both to be dipped into boiling wash-water. For coffee, cocoa, and soup it was recommended that the cup be filled only three-quarters full of water to accommodate the addition of the beverage powder, allow stirring, and prevent spillage and boiling over. Besides these the cup was used to heat C- and K-rations. In times of desperation, cups were also used to dig foxholes, bail water, or even as foxhole "chamber pots."

The M1910 canteen cup was normally made of aluminum though sometimes of tin- or zinc-plated steel, and was used with all subsequent models of 1-qt canteens except the enameled M1942. One complaint was that the cup's thick rolled lip retained heat and could burn the user's lips; another was that they were too shiny. In 1943 it was redesignated the "aluminum canteen cup" with "M1910" deleted.

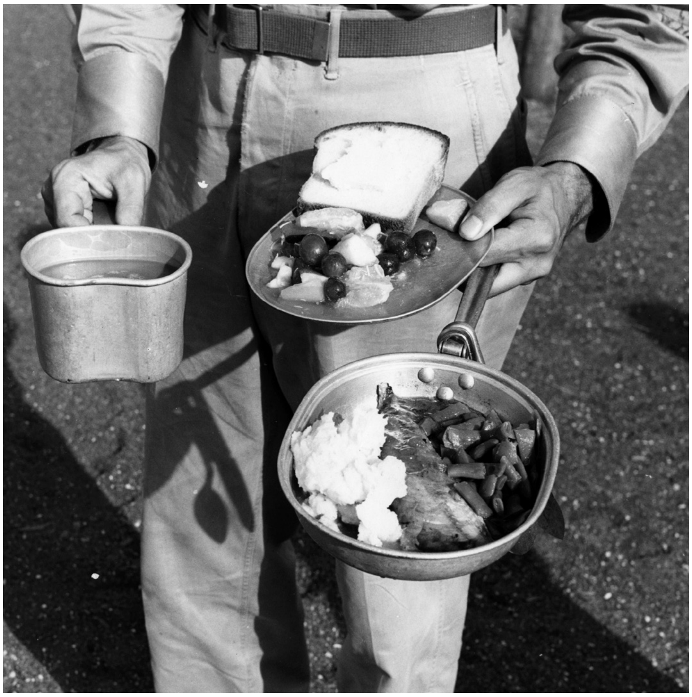
The M1942 canteen cup was porcelain-enameled inside and out, to accompany the M1942 canteen; its handle and latch were bare steel. Overheating these cups or repeatedly using them to boil water could damage the enamel over time, though this could generally withstand temperatures of 200–300°F (93–149°C).

The stainless steel canteen cup made of dull-finished stainless steel was introduced in 1943 to accompany the stainless steel canteen. It was of the same design as the M1910 cup, but had a flared lip instead of the rolled edge in order to eliminate the burned-lips problem. It was soon redesignated the "corrosion resistant steel canteen cup." Only one cup was issued to soldiers who were provided two canteens.

The M1910 dismounted **canteen cover** conforming to the shape of all 1-qt canteen models was secured by two rounded flaps passing forward over the canteen's shoulders, with LTD fasteners. The body was canvas, and lined with wool felt; this helped insulate the canteen in cold weather and, when dampened, helped keep the water at a drinkable temperature in hot climates. On the back was a double-hook. Covers were sometimes used instead to carry four hand grenades.

The M1917 and M1941 mounted canteen covers appeared identical to the M1910 dismounted model from the front. The M1917 had two small web loops across the side surfaces; a narrow web strap threaded through these and around the bottom, with a snaphook at the top end to fasten it to the saddle. Prewar M1917 covers had brown leather hanger straps. There was no double-hook on the back to allow it to be attached to the belt.

The M1941 cover was basically an M1910 dismounted cover with a double-hook fixed to a long web strap on the back. It was reinforced top and bottom by horizontal web straps. A short web hanger strap with an adjusting buckle and snaphook was riveted to a short horizontal web strap with two eyelets matching the double-hook. This allowed canteens to be attached to the saddle or hooked on racks inside vehicles. The hanger strap or extender could be removed and the cover attached to a belt in the normal manner. Mounted covers were issued to mounted and dismounted cavalry, infantry regimental cannon companies, self-propelled 105mm howitzer batteries, and tank unit enlisted men.



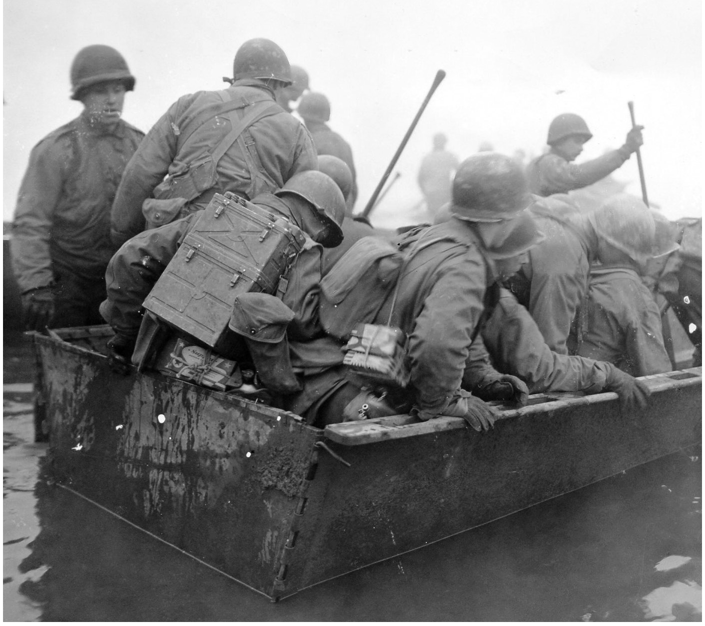
In a barracks context, a typical B-ration meal prepared by the company mess section and served up in an M1910 mess kit; the later M1932 mess kit had a much deeper two-section lid. This meal comprises mixed fruit, bread, baked fish (some kind of meat was more common), mashed potatoes, and green beans, with coffee in an M1910 canteen cup. The shadow on the soldier's right leg shows that an M1926 knife and spoon are hung over the mess kit's handle; when the mess gear was being washed the utensils were again hung on the handle, as was the lid by means of a small D-ring on one end. (Texas Military Forces Museum)

The 2-quart **collapsible canteen** with cover, known by the commercial name of "Flexo Canteen" but more generally as the "jungle canteen," was produced during 1943–45 but saw only limited use. The cover was square-shaped with rounded corners, and had an opening in the top covered by a rounded flap secured by an LTD fastener. A wide adjustable shoulder strap was sewn to the back upper corners. Some early covers had a wire belt hook, allowing them to be fastened to the belt and easily removed for drinking or filling; however, during movement they easily fell off. The 2-qt (64 fl oz or 1.88-liter) canteen bladder was made of translucent or white vinyl, with the same Bakelite cap as 1-qt canteens. Trial models were field tested in 1942–43 to possibly replace the 1-qt canteen, but they proved to be too heavy and bulky to carry on a belt, and had no provision for the canteen cup necessary for heating water and beverages.

Mess gear

Officially, the oval-shaped mess kits were called "meat cans." Measuring 8⅜in x 6¾in, they consisted of two components: the "pan" or "skillet" with a folding handle was officially the "meat can body," and the shallow "plate" was officially the "meat can lid."

The aluminum M1932 mess kit had a deeper pan than earlier models. The deeper lid/plate had a large channel down the center for the folding handle, and this further served to divide the plate into two compartments. The divided plate could be set on the pan's extended handle so the pan and plate were end-to-end and could be held in place by one hand when being served food, allowing the canteen cup to be carried in the other hand. When not in use the plate fitted over the pan as a lid, and the pan's tapered handle folded over it, fitting into the channel with its hooked end latched onto the pan's rim to secure it. In 1944, the M1932 kit was redesignated the "aluminum



Men of a company command group launch an M2 assault boat to cross a water obstacle in the European Theater. The radioman, with an SCR-300 "walkie-talkie" set used for company-battalion communications, and the man beside him on his right, both carry three K-ration meals. Since they have no packs, they have tied the cartons into bundles with cords and slung them over their shoulders. (Tom Laemlein/ Armor Plate Press)

meat can." M1910 and M1918 mess kits were also used; their lids were shallow plates without a central divide. The M1942 mess kit was made in both aluminum and, from 1943, stainless steel; it had a straight steel handle and an improved hinge.

Mess kits were carried in the detachable "meat can pocket" on the M1910 and M1928 haversacks or inside the musette bag, rucksack, or field pack (see below). Besides eating field kitchen-served food from the mess kit, it was also used to heat canned rations emptied into the "skillet." The mess kit was not intended for cooking over open fires; soldiers might be disciplined when scorch marks were discovered during inspections, but this tended to be acceptable in the realities of wartime.

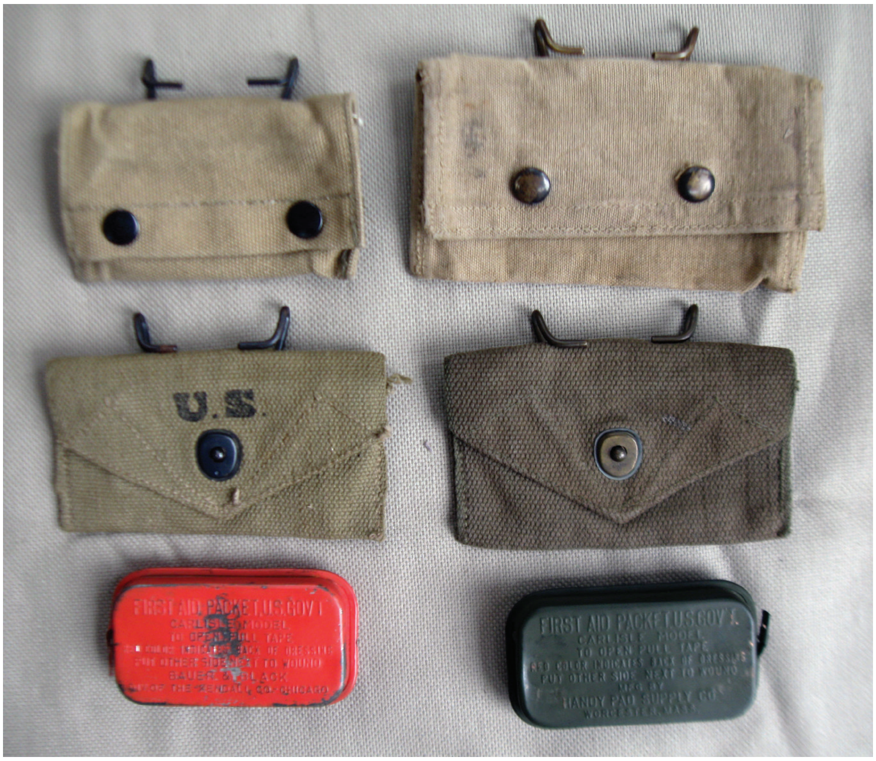
The M1926 knife, fork, and spoon were 7½in-long utensils that did not enter production until 1941. The knife had a cast aluminum handle, though some were black Bakelite. The fork had four tines and the spoon was of two-tablespoon capacity. The similar M1910 utensils remained in use; these lacked holes in the end of the handles to allow the utensils to be hung on mess kit handles for dunking in boiling wash-water. (Holes were to be added in 1934, but few issued items were modified.) In combat most soldiers carried only a spoon, this being sufficient for the often stew-based meals.

First aid items

The US Army was one of the few that issued a first aid pouch as opposed to simple field dressings. Soldiers of most armies carried their one or two field dressings in a special pocket on the inside of their tunic or on the trousers. Most armies issued two dressings, one small and one large for entry and exit wounds, respectively, or for multiple fragmentation wounds. The US Army issued only one, relying on aidmen to provide more, though some soldiers did carry more than one dressing, usually in a pocket.

First aid pouches consisted of a rectangular web pocket with a securing flap and double-hooks on the back for belt attachment. The M1910 first aid pouch had a straight flap secured by two small snaps, and was smaller than later models. It held a field dressing in a brown rectangular brass can. The M1924 first aid pouch was slightly longer than the M1910 to accommodate the new Carlisle first aid dressing in a rectangular metal can. The pouch had a double-hook, and a V-shaped flap with a single LTD fastener. Most production occurred from 1941 and into the war. The later cardboard-carton dressing could be pressed down to fit into the M1924 pouch, but was difficult to remove. The M1942 first aid packet pouch was slightly enlarged to accommodate the larger but cheaper waxed cardboard carton. Measuring 5¾in x 3¾in x 1in, it was otherwise of the same design as the M1924 pouch – they had the same stock number.

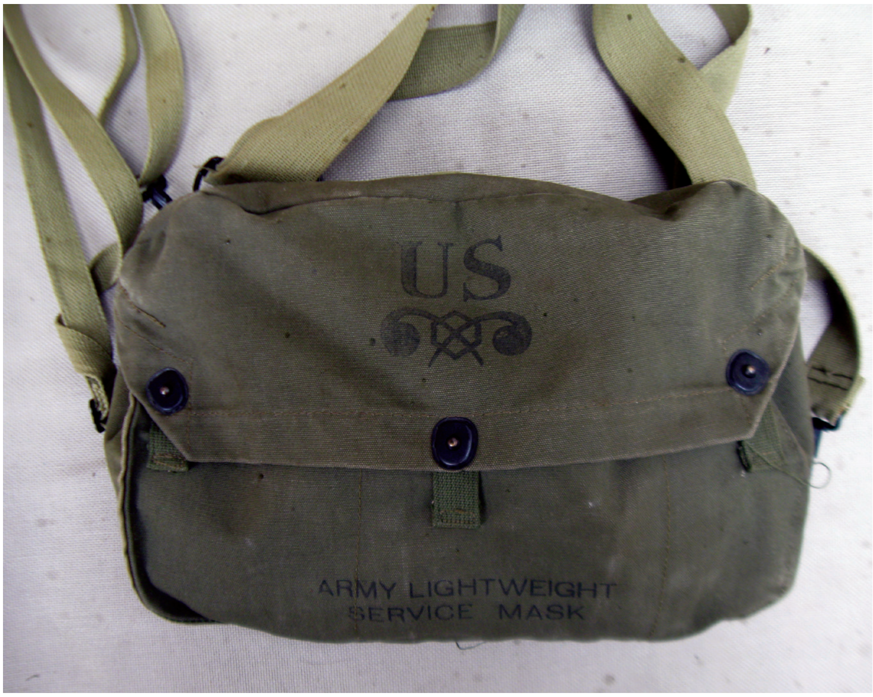
The M2 individual **jungle first aid kit** was introduced in 1943 to replace


U.S.
FIRST AID PACKET U.S.GOV'T
CARLISLE MODEL
TO OPEN PULL TAPE
RED COLOR INDICATES BACK OF DRESSING
PUT OTHER SIDE NEXT TO WOUND
BAUER & BLACK
FIRST AID PACKET U.S.GOV'T
CARLISLE MODEL
TO OPEN PULL TAPE
RED COLOR INDICATES BACK OF DRESSING
PUT OTHER SIDE NEXT TO WOUND
MFG BY
HANDY PAD SUPPLY CO.
WORCESTER, MASS.

First aid pouches. Left and right, top: basic M1910 for field dressing; and for comparison, larger M1910 "pouch for diagnostic tags and instruments" for use on the specialist "belt, medical corpsman's," containing tags, a pencil, an instrument case, forceps, and scissors. Left and right, center: M1924 pouch for Carlisle field dressing in can; and slightly larger M1942 "first aid packet pouch" for dressing in waxed cardboard carton. Left and right, bottom: cans for Carlisle field dressing, painted red (early war) to indicate that it contains sulfa powder, and later type painted olive drab. (Corey Helweg Collection)

the inadequate M1 "tool roll" kit. It was widely issued in 1944 in the Pacific and China-Burma-India theaters, and saw limited issue in Europe. The kit could be carried anywhere, but usually on the rear of the cartridge or pistol belt. It was contained in a canvas pouch with a large flap coming halfway down the front and secured by two snaps. On the back was a double-hook plus a web belt loop. On the bottom of the back panel were two eyelets to allow the attachment of a first aid pouch below it. Internal canvas dividers separated the case into three large and two small compartments. Standard contents were as follows, but were sometimes "customized":
Frazer's Solution for Athlete's Foot, 1 fl oz bottle
Iodine, 2cc bottle
Insect repellent, 2 fl oz bottle
Sulfadiazine tablets, 8-tablet packet
Halazone water purification tablets, 100-tablet bottle
Atabrine anti-malaria tablets, 30-tablet vial
Small Carlisle first aid dressing
3in x 1in adhesive bandages, three.

The small Carlisle model **first aid dressing** was issued in several different types of packaging, with most measuring approximately 4in x 2in x 1 inch. When opened, its ½in-thick absorbent pad measured 7in x 4in and had two long gauze tie-tapes. The dressings were initially made from all-white materials, but from late 1943 they had brown (OD) tie-tapes and outer backing on the dressing. The white dressing had a red dye mark on the back; the unmarked side went next to the wound. The Carlisle dressing was developed at the Medical Equipment Laboratory, Carlisle Barracks Military Reservation, Pennsylvania from 1922, but did not enter production until 1940. The OD-painted brass "sardine can" containers measured 4¼in x 2⅛in



Carrier for the service gasmask, with shoulder and waist straps which allowed the carrying position to be adjusted. Note stencils of Chemical Warfare Service insignia, and "ARMY LIGHTWEIGHT/SERVICE MASK." This satchel was seen in use simultaneously with the larger, irregularly-shaped type for the M1A2 and M2A1 gasmasks. In addition to the facepiece and filter-can linked by a corrugated tube, bags contained pockets for expendable plastic eyeshields, sealing bungs, wire clips, etc. In the field the gasmask proved unnecessary, and soldiers often "lost" them if they could get away with it, though this type of carrier might be used as an expedient field bag. (Corey Helweg Collection)

x 1in deep and were sealed with a tear-strip and pull-tab. When sulfa-powder packets were added in the fall of 1941 the dressings were recalled, a sulfa packet inserted, and the containers repainted red. Later, those containers with sulfa powder were painted OD for camouflage, and were embossed on the back "With Crystalline Sulfanilamide" or "With Sulfanilamide."

In mid-1940, a wax-coated cardboard carton was introduced alongside the sardine can. In 1942, copper containers were introduced, to be followed by steel containers by the year's end. In early 1943 OD plastic containers were introduced, but proved inadequate. New-production dressings began to be packed in a laminated paper and lead foil package inside a waxed carton; the paper packaging might be medium or dark brown, dark green, or black, with white markings.

Crystalline sulfanilamide shaker envelopes were introduced in the fall of 1941, with a small 5-gram envelope included in metal field-dressing containers. The powder was to be sprinkled on open wounds to help prevent infection, but proved ineffective, as it was only on the wound's surface and could not reach the interior. From July 1944 the 5-gram envelope was no longer packed in new-production dressing containers, though it remained in previously produced dressings.

"Sulfa powder" had been preceded by packets of 12x 0.5-gram sulfanilamide tablets. The box was too large to fit in the first aid pouch, so the shaker envelope was introduced. In 1942, the 12-tablet box was replaced by an 8-tablet laminated paper package that did fit in the first aid pouch along with a dressing. When wounded, the soldier was to take 8 tablets orally followed by a large amount of water. If sweating had been great, or if large amounts of water could not be taken both with the drug and for 24 hours afterward (wine could be substituted for water), casualties were not supposed to take the tablets. Eventually sulfa tablets were made obsolete by the increased availability of penicillin.

The US Army adopted the morphine syrette as its standard anesthetic or painkiller in 1940. This consisted of a small pliable tube resembling a toothpaste tube containing a ½-grain (30-milligram) dose of morphine. A hypodermic needle was fixed in the tube, with a wire loop plunger inside the needle, which was protected by a plastic cover. Injection in the thigh or upper arm was recommended. Morphine is effective for 3–4 hours; its full effects are not felt for 20–30 minutes, although relief begins to be felt very soon after injection. A second injection was not to be given within 2 hours of the first, as too much morphine caused respiratory problems or even death. Patients were not to be administered morphine if experiencing severe pain in the abdomen of unknown cause, unconsciousness, depressed respiration (under 12 breaths per minute), if they were suffering head injuries, had received morphine within the last 2 hours, or would be undergoing surgery under general anesthesia. Aidmen were directed to mark an "M" on the patient's forehead, or insert the expended syrette's needle in a collar and bend it over to hold it; this alerted aid stations that the patient had already received morphine. They were also to indicate the morphine injection and time on the Emergency Medical Tag tied to the patient. War correspondents narrating newsreels mentioned how well wounded Americans endured their suffering in silence; the reality is that they were dosed on morphine.

BACKPACKS

"Backpacks" include haversacks, musette bags, field packs, and rucksacks: that is, the packs used to carry the bulk of a soldier's spare clothing, rations, field equipment, shelter, and personal items.

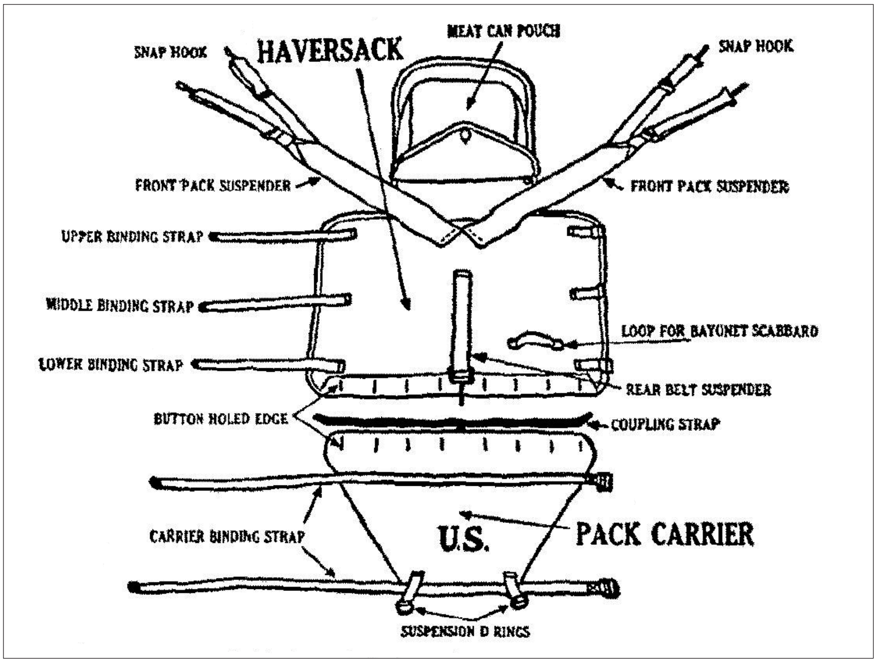
While the various backpacks were of very different designs, the basic contents were similar; those listed here under the different backpacks are purely examples. There was wide variation depending on unit standards, climate and terrain conditions, but also on personal preference; much latitude was often permitted, as soldiers learned lessons from experience. (One common variation was that a pick-mattock or hatchet might be substituted for the attached entrenching tool.)

Most US Army troops seen in photos or film in combat are not carrying haversacks or musette bags, as these were typically carried in unit transport. Paratroopers, glider troops, and the initial waves of amphibious assault troops carried their packs until the ground transport echelon linked up, and this was naturally also true of troops on extended missions separate from their parent unit or in areas inaccessible to vehicles.

American backpacks were inadequate for extended operations, lacking sufficient space for additional rations, mission equipment, seasonal clothing, and shelter. They were designed for ideal logistical situations, and allowed only one day's rations to be carried, along with minimal spare clothing for temperate conditions. It would not be until the Vietnam War in the 1960s that the US Army fully recognized this.

The type of backpacks issued to troops varied by branch, theater, and timeframe:

M1928 haversack: Infantrymen, glider infantry, engineers, ordnance, medical, and Military Police. (Note for British readers: the generic term "haversack" in British usage refers to a bag slung at the side of the body, with a backpack generically being termed a "knapsack" until the beginning of the 20th century. The American term follows the original French *havresac.*)


SNAP HOOK
HAVERSACK
MEAT CAN POUCH
SNAP HOOK
FRONT PACK SUSPENDER
FRONT PACK SUSPENDER
UPPER BINDING STRAP
MIDDLE BINDING STRAP
LOOP FOR BAYONET SCABBARD
LOWER BINDING STRAP
REAR BELT SUSPENDER
BUTTON HOLED EDGE
COUPLING STRAP
CARRIER BINDING STRAP
U.S.
PACK CARRIER
SUSPENSION D RINGS

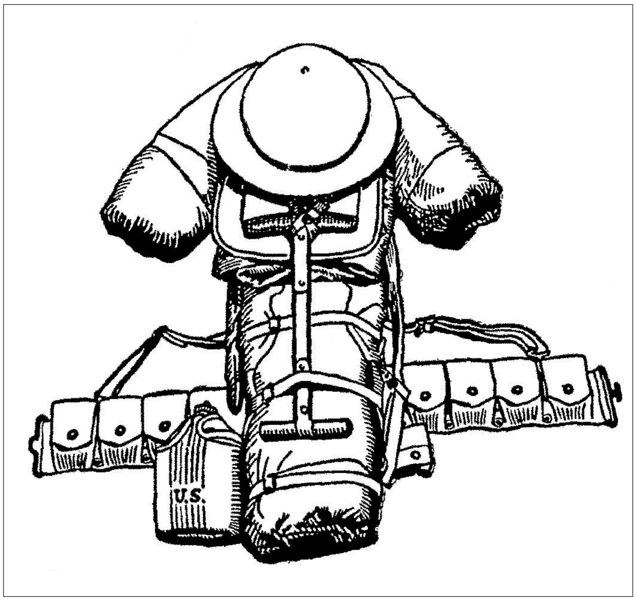
Instructional drawing of the M1928 haversack, and the pack carrier for the bedding roll – these were considered to be two separate items of equipment, but the detachable meat can pouch (for the mess kit) was a component of the haversack. The coupling strap to link the two assemblies through their buttonholed edges was originally of leather, later of webbing. (US Army)

M1936 field bag (musette bag): All officers and warrant officers regardless of branch, to include those in otherwise haversack-equipped units; parachute infantry, tank, tank destroyer, armored infantry, antiaircraft and field artillery, mechanized and horse cavalry; engineers, MPs, ordnance, medical if assigned to armored divisions; signal, transportation, quartermaster, adjutant general corps (administrative), WACs, and USAAF ground units.

Jungle pack/M1943 field pack: Selected infantry units in the Pacific Theater, and some units in Europe in lieu of haversacks.

"M1944" combat-and-cargo field pack: Began to replace M1928 haversacks, M1936 field bags, and M1943 field packs in late 1944, to be replaced in turn by the *M1945 combat-and-cargo field pack* soon after the war.

Rucksack: All units in Alaska and Arctic/alpine regions.



The assembled M1928 haversack with bedding roll – a modified version of the original M1910 assembly – for full march order. From top to bottom: overcoat and field jacket in "horseshoe" roll; M1917A1 "dishpan" helmet, over the meat can pouch; M1910 entrenching tool and carrier, and raincoat or poncho under the haversack flap; M1905 bayonet on left side; shoulder suspenders hooked to the M1910 cartridge belt (some still in use early in World War II); M1910 canteen and cover, and M1910 first aid pouch. (US Army)

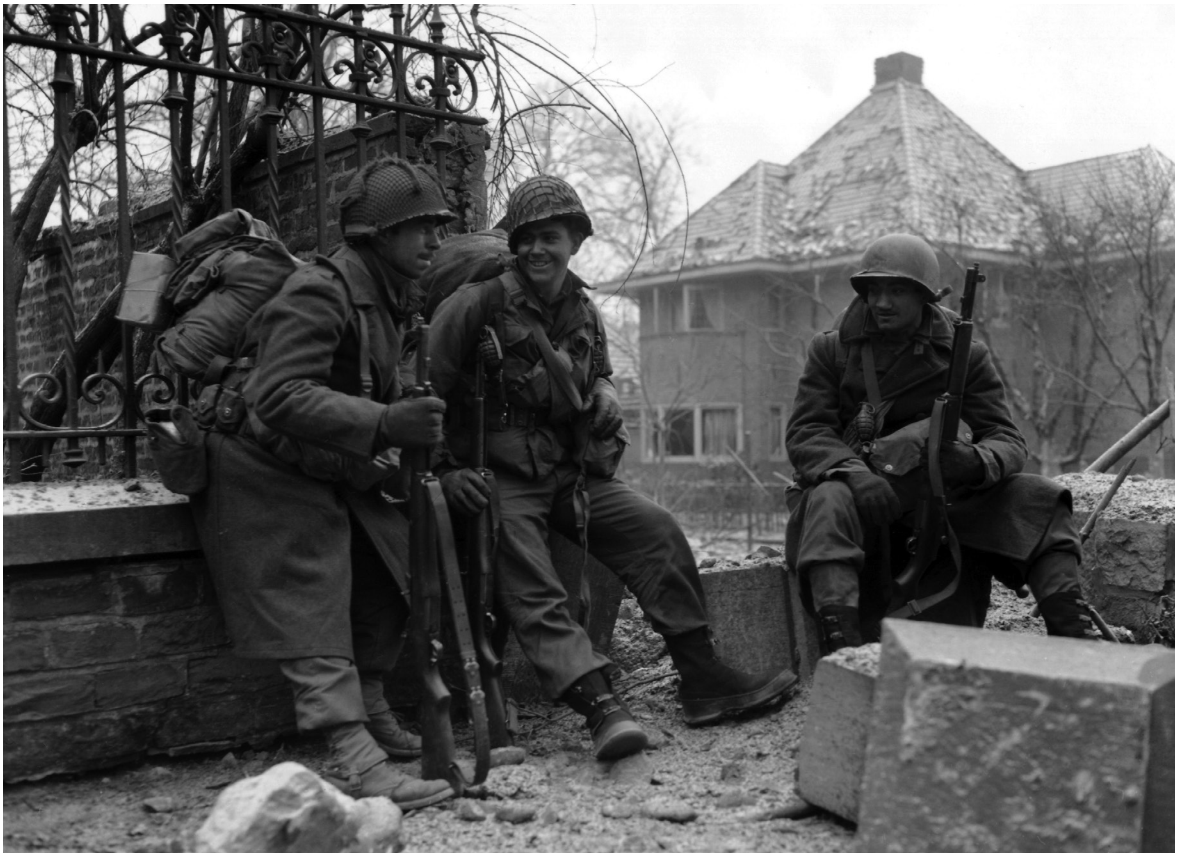
M1928 haversack

This has been called one of the worst pieces of individual equipment ever used by the US Army. This nightmarish assembly of canvas and webbing was merely a modification of the M1910 haversack, redesigned for simplified manufacture. It consisted of a large square back panel with three horizontal binding straps, the shoulder straps with belt-attaching straps, and one or two rear belt-attaching straps. Extending below this was a rectangular panel: the "diaper." The haversack's contents were bundled up, laid on the back panel, and the "diaper" folded up over it and secured by the binding straps.

Another rectangular panel extended from the top of the back panel; this outer flap was folded down over the packed load and strapped in place. The 8in x 7in x 2in detachable "meat can pouch" was attached to this flap at the top of the haversack by a rectangular ring at each of the back corners. The entrenching (originally "intrenching") tool was attached below the meat can pouch, and the bayonet scabbard was attached to the left side.

The bedding roll was made up by laying out a shelter half with the triangular ends folded inward to make a rectangle; this was folded in half lengthwise. One or two wool blankets were folded twice lengthwise, then in half widthwise, and centered on the shelter half. Spare underwear and socks were laid on the blanket. Tent-pole sections and tent pins were laid on the blanket oriented lengthwise, and the whole bedroll was tightly rolled up with one end formed into an envelope fold. This roll was secured in a vertical position by the detachable pack carrier – a roughly triangular panel laced to the bottom of the haversack's back panel by a leather coupling strap – and this extended below the hips to form the "long pack." If required, the overcoat could be rolled and lashed to the top of the haversack in a horseshoe roll, while the M1938 raincoat was folded in a square and placed under the haversack flap for easy accessibility.

The M1928 haversack had to be precisely packed with specified items only, and provided no room for additional gear and rations. The shoulder and back straps had to be attached to the soldier's belt – cartridge, BAR, or pistol – and the haversack could not be carried without attachment to a belt; the original concept had envisaged the haversack being worn at all times. The



The left-hand man carries the M1928 haversack without the bedding roll. This group of riflemen from the same squad, photographed in the Ardennes, demonstrate the extent of individual preference allowed. Two wear wool overcoats, and the center man the M1943 field jacket. The central and right-hand men wear Arctic overshoes, and the left man service shoes with M1938 web leggings. The left-hand man has small-mesh camouflage netting over his helmet garnished with a burlap strip, the central man medium-mesh, and the right-hand man no netting. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press) pack carrier with the bedding roll could be detached and left with unit transport, and it was seldom carried attached as described above.

Contents Attachments and contents prescribed by the manual for a rifleman's M1928 haversack in 1942 were as follows:

1x entrenching tool w/carrier, 1x bayonet w/scabbard; 1x shelter half w/5x pins, 1x 3-section tent pole, guy line; 1 or 2x wool blankets, 1x wool overcoat (seasonal), 1x M1938 raincoat
1x mess kit w/utensils, 1x C-ration (3x meals)
1x toilet kit, 1x bath towel
1x pair socks, 1x set spare underwear, 1x handkerchief; 1x pair shoelaces & legging laces.

M1936 field bag

This was better known as the "musette bag." This small haversack could be carried by a field-bag carrying strap over the left shoulder, hung at waist or

D

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS EQUIPMENT

The US Army employed a number of infantry automatic weapons: .45cal M192 A1, M1 and M1A1 Thompson and M3 "grease gun" submachine guns; the .30cal M191 A1 and A2 Browning Automatic Rifles; and .30cal Browning machine guns (M1919A4 and A6 air-cooled; M1917A1 water-cooled). Each of the three rifle companies in an infantry battalion had two M1919A4 or later A6 light machine guns, and its weapons company eight M1917A1 heavy machine guns. Submachine guns were not assigned to rifle companies, although some units obtained a few; they were issued to paratroopers and Rangers, to certain vehicle drivers, and to MPs. Special web items, bags, and cans were issued to carry ammunition for all these weapons.

(1) This BAR-gunner, displaying the insignia of a "tech 5" on his overcoat, carries his squad's single M1918A2 BAR; some squads managed to acquire an additional automatic rifle. Neither paratroop nor armored infantry squads were authorized the BAR, but again, some squads obtained one. The gunner wears the M1937 BAR magazine belt with M1936 suspenders; the belt could accommodate 12x 20-rd magazines, but eight was the standard load, the other two pockets being used for spare parts, accessories, and an oil can. The BAR ammunition bearer carried two ammunition carrying bags (see Plates B7 & C7), each with ten magazines.

(2) M1937 BAR belt in early-war OD Shade No.9, here with a British-made M1942 first aid pouch and British-made M1910 canteen carrier attached.

(2a) One important accessory carried in a belt pocket was this loader for feeding rounds from 5-rd charger clips into the magazine.

(2b) Another important accessory was the M1918 leather pouch for spare parts.

(2c & 2d) Small, fragile parts were held in two fabric envelopes, measuring 3 x 3 and 5 x 3 inches.

(2e) 3 fluid oz oil can; without the brass spout attached it measured 3¾in x 2½in x ¾in thick.

(3) The leader of an M1917A1 HMG squad carried, on the right front of his pistol belt, an M1917 machine-gun clinometer in a leather case. The clinometer was a vertical-angle measuring instrument used when delivering long-range indirect fire.

(4) The M1910 "intrenching axe" was actually a small hatchet (an axe is a two-handed tool, a hatchet one-handed). It was useful for clearing fields of fire as well as for chopping roots when digging machine-gun positions. The M1910 carrier is illustrated in both US-made (left) and the cruder British-made (right) versions.

(5a & 5b) The carrier (5a) for the 50-rd drum magazine (5b) of the M1928A1 Thompson SMG was carried on both a belt loop and a shoulder strap, though early-issue carriers from commercial stocks lacked the strap. The 50-rd drum was phased out during the war; it could not be fitted to the M1 or M1A1 Thompson.

(6) Five-pocket SMG magazine carrier, holding 5x 20-rd box magazines for the M1928A1 Thompson; they would also fit M1 and M1A1 Thompsons, but these were issued with 30-rd magazines.

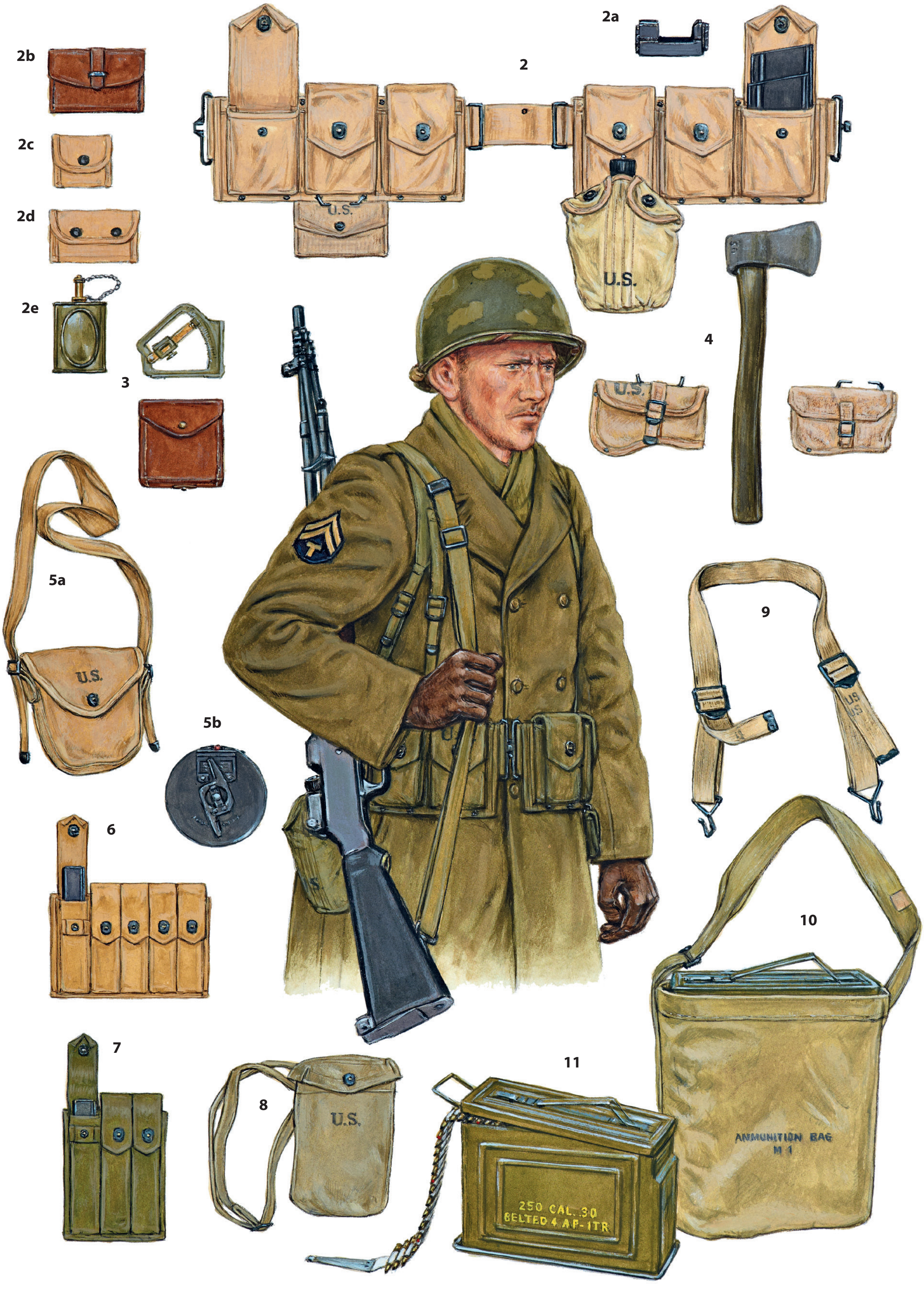
(7) Three-pocket SMG magazine carrier, holding 3x 30-rd magazines for the M1 and M1A1 Thompson, and the M3 "grease gun" (the latter were not interchangeable with Thompson magazines).

(8) The 30-rd magazine case with shoulder strap could hold 6x 30-rd Thompson or M3 "grease gun" magazines.

(9) The web machine gun and ammunition carrying sling, 1½in wide with adjustment buckles and squared hooks, was used to carry machine guns, ammunition cans, and M1/M1A1 7-qt water chests. An ammunition box or water chest was hooked onto each end by the handle and the sling then placed across the shoulders, with the loads at about hip level and steadied by the hands. One sling was issued to each LMG or HMG ammunition bearer.

(10) The M1 ammunition bag accommodated three 60mm or two 81mm mortar rounds, or two stacked M1 ammunition cans each holding a 250-rd belt. Machine-gun ammunition bearers were issued two bags, but normally carried only one can per bag, since four cans weighed 88 pounds.

(11) M1 ammunition can with protruding 250-rd .30cal machine-gun feed belt; cans measured 10¾ x 7¼ x 3¾ inches. Web machine-gun belts were white until late 1944, when OD belts were introduced. Disintegrating-link metal belts were originally for aircraft use, but ground units also began to receive them late in 1944.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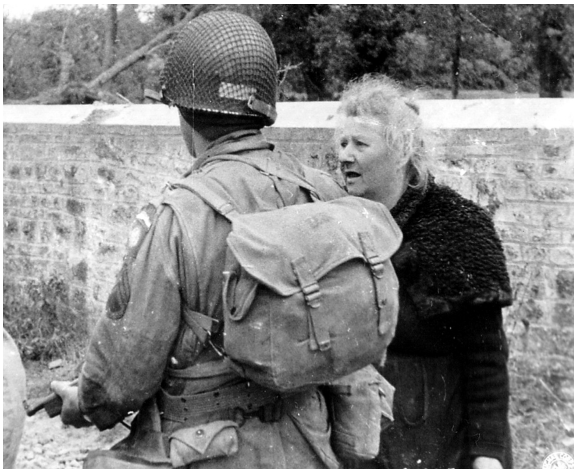
M 1
250 CAL. 30
BELTED 4 AP-1TR



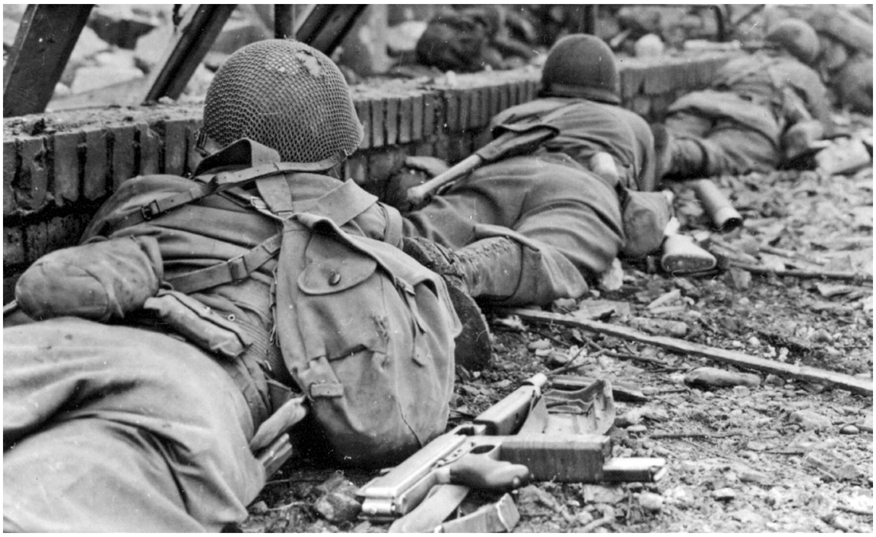
A paratrooper staff sergeant in Normandy, carrying the M1936 field bag (aka "musette") attached to his M1936 suspenders as a pack; the small accessory pocket on the left side can be seen. The horizontal white bar painted on the back of his helmet identifies him as an NCO; officers used a vertical bar. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

hip level on the right side. It could also be attached as a backpack to the M1936 suspenders, by two integral adjustable straps with snaphooks at the end, and D-rings behind the bottom of the bag. When the field-bag carrying strap was used, it was attached to the two integral straps with snaphooks. Paratroopers would sling it on their side with the shoulder strap under the parachute harness, or attach it below the reserve parachute with its front facing inward; this prevented the flap buckles from snagging on deploying canopy suspension lines. After landing they would shift it to their back, attached to the suspenders.

The 12in x 11in x 5in bag was divided into two widthwise compartments by a doubled section of canvas with two thin internal pockets. The bag was secured by a large flap and two buckled straps. On the left end was a small button-closed pocket, and on the back a thin envelope pocket also secured by a button. On the inside of the flap was a canvas loop for holding three tent-pole sections, and a shelter half could be attached to the outside of the bag as a "horseshoe roll." A folded raincoat or poncho could be carried under the flap, or, if the securing straps were fully extended, a one- or two-blanket bedroll. An equipment attachment tab with eyelets was fitted to the front flap on some field bags in late 1944, and during that year the longer general-purpose carrying strap replaced the earlier design.

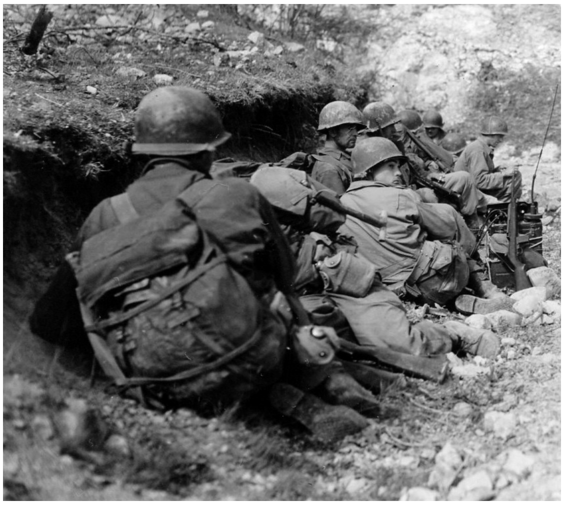
Contents There were no "by the book" prescribed contents, but a 1942 list of recommended contents of officers' musette bags included the following (enlisted men's contents were similar):

1x wool overcoat (lashed to outside when not worn in cold weather); 1x M1938 raincoat (under the flap or tightly rolled inside; later replaced by a poncho)
1x mess kit w/utensils, 1x C- or K-ration (3x meals), 1x D-ration bar
1x toilet kit, 1x bath towel, 1x M5 protective ointment set
1x field cap, 1x pair gloves, 1x handkerchief
1x TL-122 series flashlight.



Infantrymen hugging the dirt for cover from a sniper. The foreground man wears an M1936 pistol belt and suspenders, M1910 canteen cover, M1942 first aid pouch, and, slung to hang on his right hip, a beat-up M1936 field bag. Beside him lies a .45cal M1A1 Thompson SMG with two 30-rd magazines friction-taped together for rapid reloading. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

The following contents were recommended for field bags carried by paratroopers in 1944:
1x M1938 raincoat
1x M1926 spoon, 2x K-ration meals, 2x heat-tablets, 1x bottle Halazone water purification tablets, 1x waterproof match box; 2x packs cigarettes
1x toilet kit, 1x bath towel; 50x sheets toilet paper; 1x bottle insect repellent
3x pairs socks, 1x set underwear, 2x handkerchiefs
1x rifle-cleaning brush, 1x can rifle bore cleaner & cleaning patches, 1x can rifle oil.



Troops of 10th Mountain Div take cover beside an Italian road, showing their M1943 field packs (formerly known as "jungle packs"). Closer inspection also reveals several older items of kit, such as T-handle M1910 entrenching tools, and M1910 canteens with steel caps. (Tom Laemlein/ Armor Plate Press)

Jungle pack or M1943 field pack

This was originally intended for tropical operations. The M1928 haversack had to be laid out flat to properly pack it – and dry, cleared ground was scarce in jungles; nor could the haversack accommodate enough necessary gear and rations when units operated semi-independently.

As a jungle pack the new item was made of five-color camouflage-printed canvas, but some 1942 production packs were olive drab.[4] Development began in 1942, and it was soon redesignated the M1943 field pack. As the M1943 pack, it was made of OD canvas, and with slightly larger dimensions. In spite of numerous modifications it continued to exhibit flaws. It was to be used in other theaters of operations as a replacement for the M1928 haversack and M1936 field bag, but saw only limited issue, and was not fully standardized owing to the adoption of the field packs described below.

The pack consisted of a large rectangular bag, with a drawstring-secured top opening covered by a large waterproof flap secured by narrow web straps. The flap incorporated a zippered cargo compartment. There was an equipment tab on the back of the flap for the entrenching tool, and another on the left side for the bayonet. Three compression straps encircled the main compartment horizontally, and one vertically; these were adjusted to accommodate the load in an attempt to reduce shifting. The suspenders were integral unpadded shoulder straps similar in design to those of the combat-and-cargo field pack (see below). They could be attached to the cartridge, pistol, or BAR belts, or used without a belt.

There were many complaints regarding packing difficulties, load adjustment and shifting – all due to the lack of internal compartments – and undue stress on the chest and shoulders; the pack also pressed against the bearer's back causing chafing and overheating. In the Philippines some soldiers discarded the pack after cutting off the top compartment to use it with a carrying strap similarly to a musette bag. The M1943 was issued in Europe on a limited scale, in late 1944 and early 1945.

Contents Typical contents of an infantryman's jungle pack in the Pacific Theater, 1944, were as follows:
1x bayonet w/scabbard, 1x entrenching tool w/carrier; 1x M1938 raincoat

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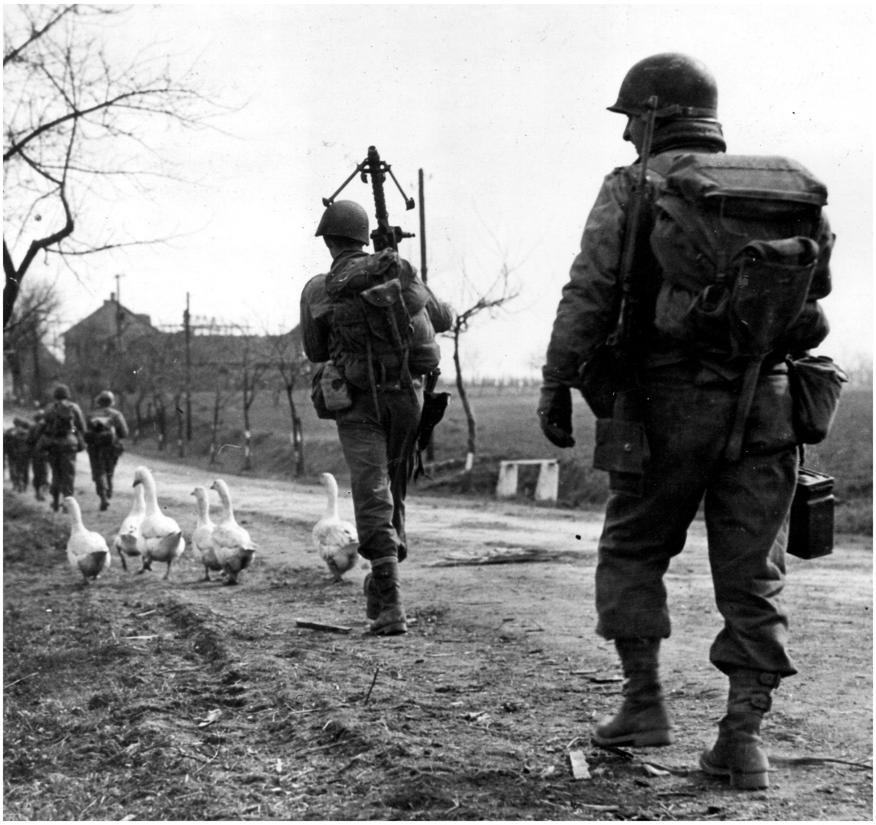
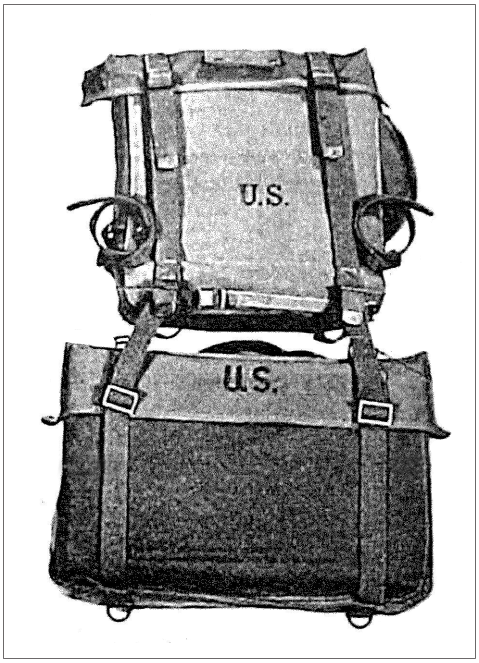
[4] The five-color pattern, known as "frog-skin" or "arbor pattern," had light and dark brown and light and medium green splotches on a light-colored background that varied in shade from light khaki to pale green. It was the only US Army web gear item in World War II made of camouflage fabric.



Despite the troops' generally poor opinion of it, the M1943 pack was also issued in Northwest Europe; here the assistant to an M1919A6 gunner of a US First Army unit wears one as he slogs across Germany in spring 1945, carrying a 250-rd ammunition can (and eying some unwary geese). Note the double magazine pouch slipped over the butt of his slung carbine; the weapon had to be disassembled before this could be done. (NARA)

(later a poncho), 1x blanket or half-blanket, 1x mosquito head net
1x mess kit w/utensils, 1x C- or K-ration (3x meals), 1x D-ration bar
1x toilet kit, 1x bath towel; 1x bottle insect repellent, 1x jungle first aid kit
1x field cap, 1x set underwear, 2x or more pairs socks, 1x handkerchief.

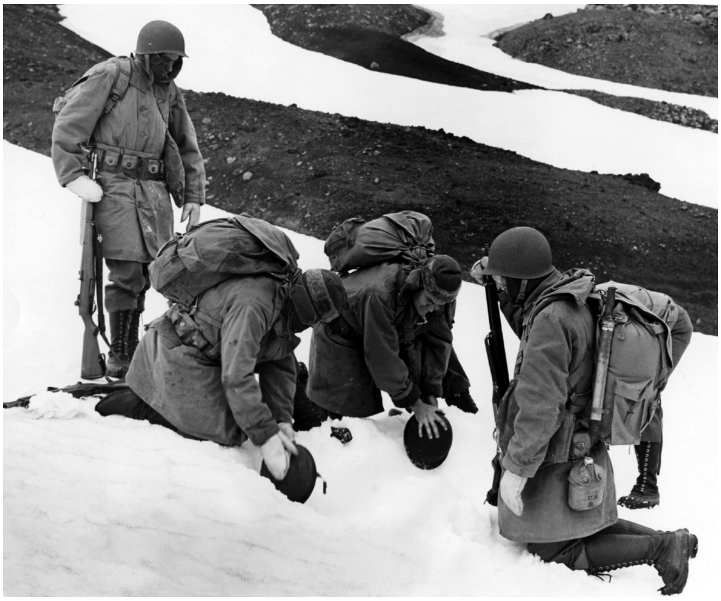


Instructional illustration showing how the two pack components of the M1945 combat-and-cargo field pack strapped together. The upper combat pack, holding essentials, was carried by means of X-back suspenders (not illustrated) that hooked onto the soldier's belt; the lower cargo pack, with sleeping bag and spare clothing, was detachable without disturbing the combat pack and suspenders. When fully assembled the two components were cinched tightly together. (US Army)

"M1944" and M1945 field packs

These were based on the US Marine Corps M1941 pack system, consisting of an upper haversack and a detachable lower knapsack. Army Ground Forces wished to adopt the Marine Corps pack without further testing, but the OQMG recommended the development of a refined version. The combat-and-cargo field pack was standardized in July 1944, with changes recommended by the Infantry Board incorporated into production packs, but it was not widely distributed. Collectors know it as the "M1944," but this was not an official designation. Army Ground Forces wanted to immediately replace all other packs with the "M1944," but the OQMG again interceded, wishing to exhaust the considerable stocks of haversacks and musette bags. Further improvements were made, resulting in the M1945 combat-and-cargo field pack adopted in April 1945; the "M1944" became limited standard, and the M1945 eventually replaced all existing packs except the rucksack.

The combat-and-cargo field pack (both models) consisted of two components plus X-back suspenders. The latter, used with both models of packs, were based on the M1936 suspenders but were not interchangeable with them. The suspenders could be attached to the front of the cartridge, pistol, or BAR belt, and attached to D-rings under the combat pack; this allowed the combat pack and suspenders to be separated easily from the lower cargo component. The upper combat pack was essentially an improved musette bag. The 13in x 12in x 5in pack was divided into two widthwise compartments by a doubled section of canvas with two thin internal pockets; the back compartment had C-ration pockets on either side. The pack was secured by a large flap and two buckled straps, and had a small button-closed accessory pocket on the right end. The entrenching tool carrier was fastened to a double-hook tab on the flap, and the bayonet attached to a similar tab on the left side. A horseshoe roll with the "mummy" sleeping bag, blankets, shelter half, and/or poncho could be rigged on the combat pack using cords, but there were no integral straps for this.


These mountain troops, using their M1 helmets to scoop up snow to melt for drinking water, wear the 1941 rucksack, which would be replaced with an improved 1942 version (see Plate G10). The right-hand man has the M1905 bayonet in its canvas-covered scabbard strapped to the left side of his rucksack. Note the early metal cap of his M1910 canteen, which froze more easily than the later black Bakelite cap. These men wear 16in shoepacs with leather uppers and rubber lowers. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

The lower cargo pack measured 16in x 9in x 6in and was a single-compartment rectangular case secured by two buckled straps, with a web carrying handle on top. It was strapped below the combat pack and could be easily removed from it. The different "M1944" and M1945 cargo packs could not be used with the other model's combat packs owing to different quick-release buckles – the "M1944's" releases would not stay fastened. Both combat and cargo packs had canvas throats externally coated with OD synthetic rubber, which could be rolled shut to improve waterproofing.

Contents Typical contents of an infantryman's "M1944" pack in Italy were:

Combat pack

1x bayonet w/scabbard, 1x entrenching tool w/carrier; 1x lightweight poncho

1x mess kit w/utensils, 3x heat-tablets, 1x K-ration (3x meals), 1x D-ration bar

1x pair socks, 1x pair gloves.

Cargo pack (detachable)

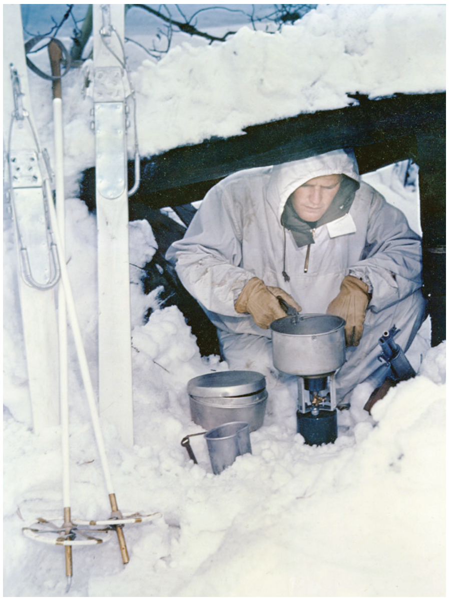
1x "mummy" sleeping bag

1x toilet kit, 1x bath towel

1x set underwear, 2x pairs socks, 1x handkerchief.

Rucksack

Two versions of this were issued under the same stock number. The poorly designed 1941 type was completely withdrawn in 1942, and a much-improved version issued immediately. The cotton canvas "mountain or Arctic rucksack" was issued to troops in Alaska, other Arctic or high alpine areas, and mountain troops. Conventional packs were too small, and also created



Wearing an overwhite parka during training, a member of 10th Mtn Div prepares a meal using a Coleman M1941 one-burner gasoline stove and an aluminum mountain cook set. The latter consists of two nesting 2½-qt (2.36-liter) pots, and a skillet with folding wire handles that doubled as a lid. The M1941 stove did not fit inside the cook set for packing, but the smaller M1942 stove did. In front of the cook set is an aluminum M1910 canteen cup; its thickly rolled edge could burn a soldier's lips when it was heated. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

a high center of gravity that was counterproductive to skiing and climbing. Troops operating in such conditions required bulky cold weather clothing, a sleeping bag, shelter tent, cooking gear, and rations for extended periods, making a larger backpack necessary. The issue rucksack was based on the Norwegian Norse Pac model, and its specifications were frequently modified.

The rucksack adopted in mid-1941, often incorrectly called the "M1941," consisted of a large, drawstring-closed main compartment secured by a large flap with one web strap. There were three external pockets secured by snaphooks. It had adjustable shoulder straps with heavy felt padding, as did the backrest strap – a narrow bellyband to prevent shifting when skiing and climbing. A heavy-gauge steel wire frame, painted dark OD, placed the load just above the hips on the backrest strap and not on the shoulders, allowing the arms more freedom of movement. The shoulder straps were attached to the frame.

E

INFANTRY OFFICERS' EQUIPMENT

Much of the equipment illustrated here was carried by officers, but not limited to them; many specialist NCOs and enlisted men carried the same items.

(1) Early in the war, this 2nd lieutenant from 9th Infantry Division (note yellow helmet bar, and left shoulder patch on Parsons field jacket) is armed with the .45cal M1911A1 Colt pistol carried in an M1916 holster on the right hip. Any one of three models of two-magazine pouches might be worn on the left front of the M1936 pistol belt or a revolver belt; this man has an obsolescent M1918, used throughout the war. Necessary gear, personal items, and rations were carried in the M1936 musette bag on the back. The bag is hidden from view at this angle, but its straps pass forward over the shoulders to hook onto the D-rings on the front of the M1936 suspenders.

(1a) Left end of pistol belt fitted with an "M1912" web two-pocket pistol magazine pouch, also used throughout World War II.

(1b – foot of page) The wartime standard pistol magazine pouch was the M1923, with a single LTD fastener positioned centrally between the two separated pockets.

(2) In 1942–43, the .30cal M1 carbine replaced the pistol as the weapon of most officers. This 1st lieutenant from 36th Inf Div (note white helmet bar, and shoulder patch on variant field jacket with forward-buttoning side pocket flaps) has two early-type web two-pocket carbine magazine pouches on his pistol belt, and has fitted a third pouch to the buttstock of his carbine. (One to five pouches were issued to carbine-armed individuals depending upon branch of service.) He also has a TL-122B flashlight hooked to his suspenders.

(2a) Left end of pistol belt fitted with two of the later M1 carbine magazine/rifle cartridge pouches, holding either 2x 15-rd carbine magazines or 2x 8-rd rifle clips. This type is distinguishable by the two bottom eyelets; here an M1942 first aid pouch is double-hooked to them.

(3a) M1938 dispatch case, closed, with original shoulder strap; the case measured 11½ x 9 inches.

(3b) M1938 dispatch case, opened, showing its gridded map-holder insert with aluminum edges. This case has the later general-purpose shoulder strap.

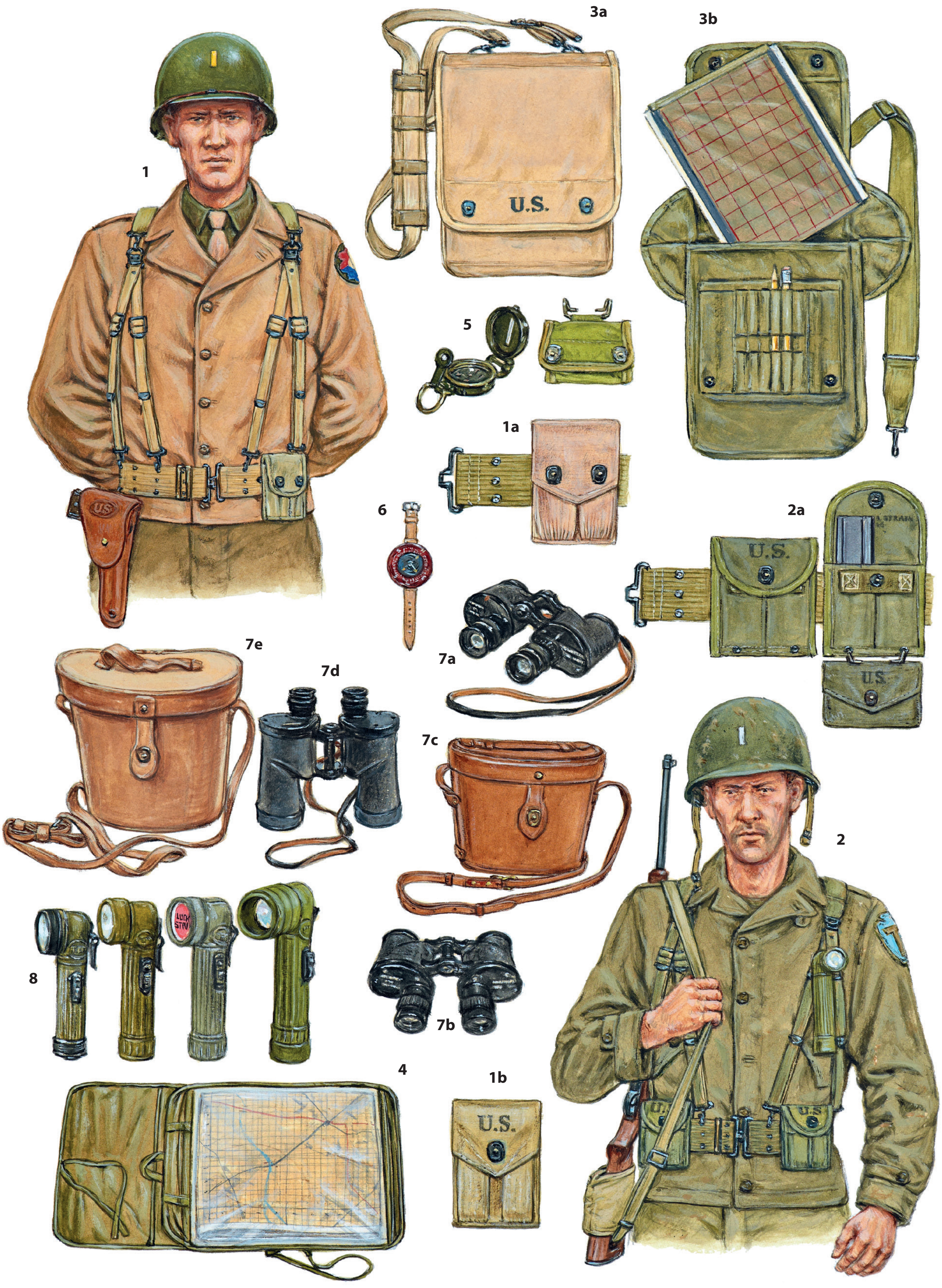
(4 – foot of page) The roll-type canvas map case issued to staff officers.

(5) M1938 lensatic compass with water- and gas-proof case, issued to officers and most senior non-commissioned officers.

(6) Liquid-filled wrist compass, issued within a rifle company to squad leaders and assistant leaders, and to messengers, drivers, and all paratroopers..

(7a–7e) The US Army used 14 different models of binoculars. The most common in the infantry and artillery were the 6x30 M3 **(7a)** and M13 **(7b)** with the M17 case **(7c)**; and the 7x50 M17 **(7d)** with the M44 case **(7e)**.

(8) Flashlights (from left to right): TL-122A (1930s – metal, 7¼in high); TL-122B (1943 – the most common model); TL-122C, and TL-122D (both 1944). All used two BA-30 (D cell) batteries. Note on the TL-122C the popular use of an inserted logo torn from a Lucky Strike cigarette packet as a makeshift red filter.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1b
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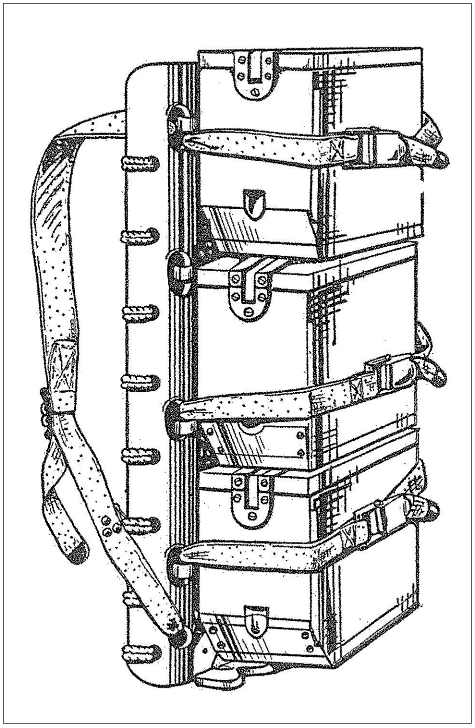
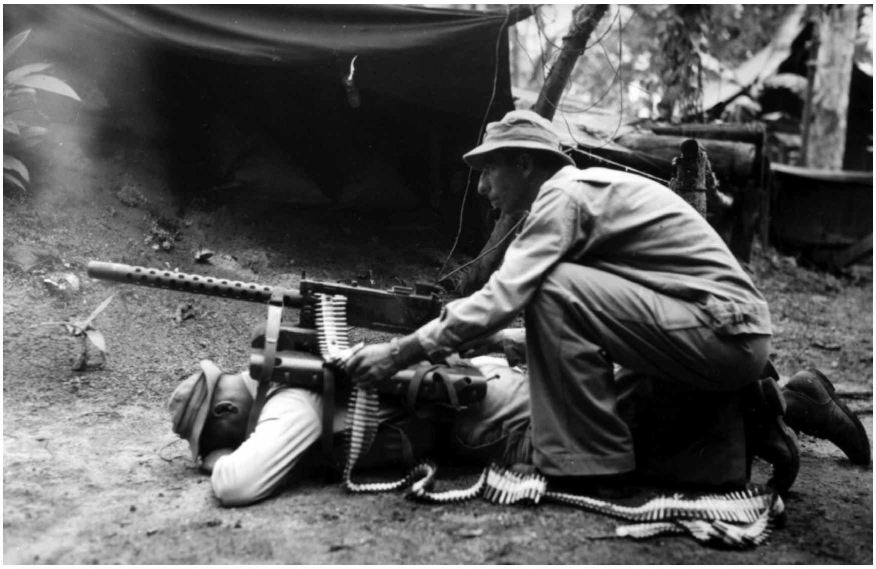
The packboard was made of dark OD molded plywood, with a tightly stretched rectangle of canvas at the front to keep it from coming into direct contact with the bearer's back. It could be used to carry ammunition in any type of box, crate or tube, as well as water and fuel cans, ration cases, radios, medical equipment and supplies, and even infantry crew-served weapons. Loads of up to 100lbs were possible, and 50lb loads were typical; here, three M1917A1 wooden boxes, each holding 250 rds of belted machine-gun ammunition, are strapped to the board. (US Army)



There were two double-hook equipment attachment tabs, one on each side, usually for the bayonet and entrenching tool. This early version was produced from late 1941 to early 1942. After examining it, the National Ski Association's Winter Equipment Committee recommended 12 changes. The 1941 version was deemed inadequate, and was withdrawn.

The much-improved 1942 version, often incorrectly called the "M1942," saw extensive revision. A drawstring-secured white snow cover was issued with it. The new frame was made of dark OD ½in steel tubing, the lower ends ("horns") of which bent around the wearer's hips in a contoured form. The shoulder straps were attached to the rucksack rather than the frame, allowing it to be carried without the frame if necessary. The top part of the frame fitted into a reinforced leather support at the rucksack's top to better support heavy loads. There were now four equipment tabs. The bellyband was separate and worn higher to improve stability, and was no longer felt-padded. Standard canvas web shoulder straps replaced the felt-padded straps, since heavy loads were the norm. A rifle-carrying strap was provided, and a snaphook was fitted to the right horn of the frame; the rifle was slung over the shoulder as normal, but the snaphook on the frame was attached to the rifle's butt sling-swivel to prevent it from slipping off during vigorous movement.



Ordnance Corps personnel on Bougainville, Solomon Islands, demonstrate an unconventional use for the packboard with a .30cal M1919A4 light machine gun attached. The gunner walked behind the gun-bearer, and if a target was to be engaged the bearer hit the ground. The gunner lay between his outspread legs and opened fire, directing the bearer to shift position slightly to vary elevation and traverse. This technique, used only in the Pacific Theater, was considerably quicker than setting up the tripod and mounting the gun. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

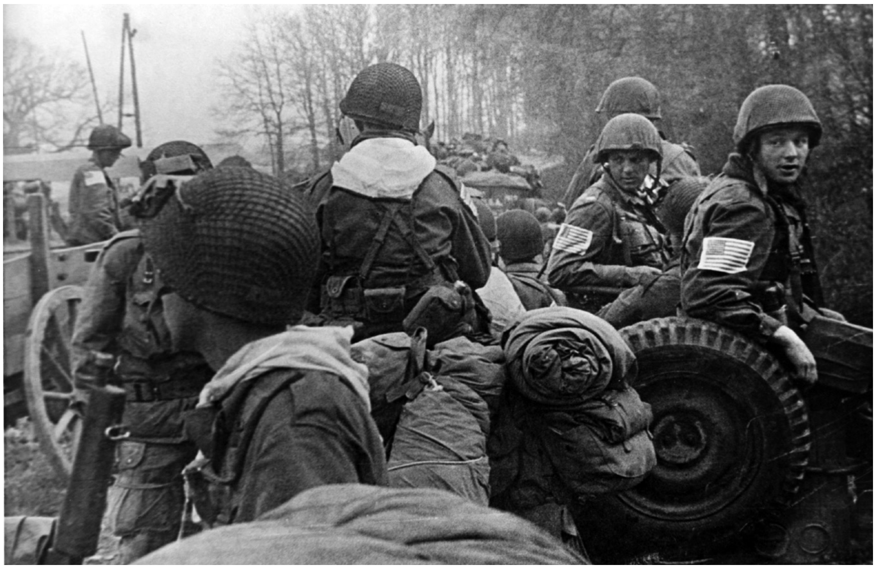
In August 1943 yet more modifications were implemented. The main compartment's two web securing straps and the external-pocket snaphooks were replaced by tan leather straps with small buckles to allow them to be more easily opened if frozen. Complaints of discomfort persisted, however, regardless of how loads were packed.

BIVOUAC EQUIPMENT

This category includes bedding and shelter used in the field: sleeping bags, bedrolls, small tents with accessories, ponchos, and anti-insect nets. Historically, war has been conducted seasonally, the "campaign season" lasting from spring through the summer and into the fall. By World War II this concept was outmoded – but an overcoat and two blankets per man were quite inadequate for troops operating in wintertime, even in temperate-climate regions.

The M1934 wool **blanket**, issued two per man for barracks and field use, was made of dark brown OD wool; it measured 84in x 66in (and was not marked with a printed "U.S." cypher). The wool overcoat was worn when sleeping, with the two blankets when necessary. In the field, bedrolls might be supplemented by "liberated" blankets and quilts. A shelter half and/or poncho might be wrapped around them for rain protection, or they were often carried in the waterproof clothing bag. As a bedroll they were replaced by the wool sleeping bag in 1944. In the tropics soldiers sometime split a blanket lengthwise and used a half-blanket to reduce weight, but this often proved inadequate: it could be chilly at night, especially when it rained.

The wool **sleeping bag** ("mummy bag") was issued in Northwest Europe and Italy in late 1944 to replace the two wool blankets. It provided the equivalent warmth of two blankets, and more effectively retained warmth by eliminating air gaps created by folds and openings in blanket bedrolls. Another benefit was that it was half the weight, and it was adequate down to temperatures of 40°F (4°C). However, its delayed issue contributed – along with inadequate winter uniforms – to 17,000 troops of First, Third, and



Paratroopers of 17th Abn Div assemble to advance after being dropped across the Rhine in late March 1945. The man in the foreground has a rolled-up sleeping bag ("mummy bag") in its water-repellent case lashed to an M1936 musette bag, which has a poncho under its flap securing straps; immediately behind his shoulders he also carries a narrow blanket roll. The light-colored "scarves" are 14in x 12in air-ground recognition panels in either white or yellow. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

Seventh Armies being hospitalized by the record cold of winter 1944/45. Mummy bags were to be issued to all troops except those in the tropics, and in the Arctic and high mountains, where special Arctic feather- and down-filled sleeping bags were issued. Some commanders complained that in frontline positions sleeping bags were dangerous, because it took several seconds to get out of one, while blankets could be immediately tossed aside. Two or more of the wool bags or one or two wool blankets could be placed inside the sleeping bag case for increased warmth.

The sleeping bag was 84in long, 28in at its widest – "one size fit all" – and was closed with a 30in-long heavy-duty quick-release zipper; full-length zippers were fitted after the war to enable faster exit. It was found that in icy weather the zipper could freeze, so soldiers in the frontline were cautioned not to close zippers under such conditions so as to avoid being trapped during an enemy attack. The mummy bag was provided with a sleeping-bag case made of water-repellent and wind-resistant balloon cloth – but it was not actually waterproof, so as not to trap condensation. The case had a head-opening and a snap-closed opening extending about halfway down its length.

F

JUNGLE EQUIPMENT, 1944

Despite the US Army's prewar experience of jungle operations in Panama and the Philippines, it was quickly recognized that it was ill-prepared to fight in the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, and elsewhere in the South and Southwest Pacific, and so there was a rush to develop and field new jungle-specific equipment – some of which proved unsuitable for frontline use. Additionally, new-production standard field equipment was fabricated from materials, or treated, to better resist constant dampness, mildew, and fungal growth.

(1) Indications that this sergeant from 24th Infantry Division is illustrated on a training exercise in-theater, rather than in combat, are the display of a full-color divisional patch above the black-painted rank insignia on his herringbone twill shirt, and the use of a camouflage-painted helmet liner complete with camouflage-attachment band rather than the M1 steel helmet (though some individuals did camouflage-paint their helmets). He has acquired an M1A1 Thompson SMG, which was not an infantry-issue weapon; it was effective at short range, but lacked penetration through dense brush and bamboo, and its sound could be mistaken for that of a Japanese light machine gun. The jungle pack developed in 1942 was redesignated the M1943 field pack, but was plagued with problems related to load stowage, stability, and comfort. An M3 trench knife with M6 scabbard and an M1943 combination entrenching tool in its carrier are attached to the pack. On his pistol belt he would carry (mostly hidden at this angle) a three-magazine SMG pouch, an M1942 first aid pouch, and two M1910 canteens. His tan-colored web gear has been partly daubed with green paint.

(2) The M1944 mosquito headnet was also used by snipers for camouflage. The M1942 headnet had openings gathered by drawstrings at both ends, with the top opening being drawn down and tightened above the brim of the helmet or hat.

(3) The jungle hammock began to be issued in 1943; it incorporated a mosquito net and a fly canopy, the corners of the latter being tied to locally cut horizontal spreader sticks. It weighed about the same as a shelter half ("pup tent") and its accessories, and could be slung in about the same time it took to erect a pup tent. However, it was ill-suited for frontline use, since once a man was inside it took a dangerously long time for him to get out of it.

(4) The 1942 jungle flotation bladder, in fabric lined with synthetic rubber, was one of those "good ideas" that did not work in practice. Measuring 14in x 8in with 6in-long oral inflation tubes, they were issued in pairs, to be placed inside shirts to provide buoyancy for stream crossings. However, they tended to escape, or shift around awkwardly; their most practical use was partly inflated as pillows or jeep seat cushions.

(5) The waterproof match case, 2.68in long and holding about 20 matches, was used in all theaters, but was particularly useful in the tropics. There was also a version with a small compass in the cap.

(6) The TL-194 jungle flashlight was 4½in long and took a single battery. It was used to mark trails and key positions behind the frontline, such as command posts and supply points.

(7) Early-model "carrier, canteen, jungle" for the 2-qt collapsible canteen: (left) back with double-hook for belt, flap open; (right) front, open, with cap of lifted canteen showing.

(8) The M1939 machete with bright 22in blade; and its leather scabbard. This machete proved too long to wield effectively in dense vegetation.

(9) The jungle waterproof food bag, lined with synthetic resin, measured 12in x 8in when flattened. It was issued with the jungle pack and also the rucksack, to keep food and personal items dry.

(10) The 18in M1942 dull-bladed machete was provided with canvas, plastic or leather scabbards, on a scale of one per rifle, machine-gun, and mortar squad.

(11) The M1 individual jungle first aid kit was a roll-up type, measuring 22in x 9in unrolled; it had to be stowed in a pack, so was difficult to access. It also contained excessive quantities of some medications, with the result that their time limits expired before they could be used.

(12) The lighter M2 kit, measuring 4¾ in x 4½ in x 2⅜ in, was usually carried more accessibly on the back of a belt.

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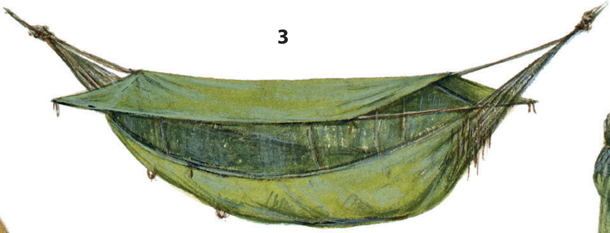

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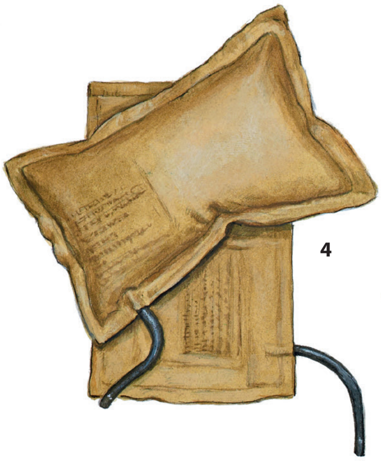

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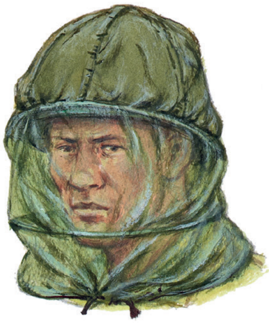

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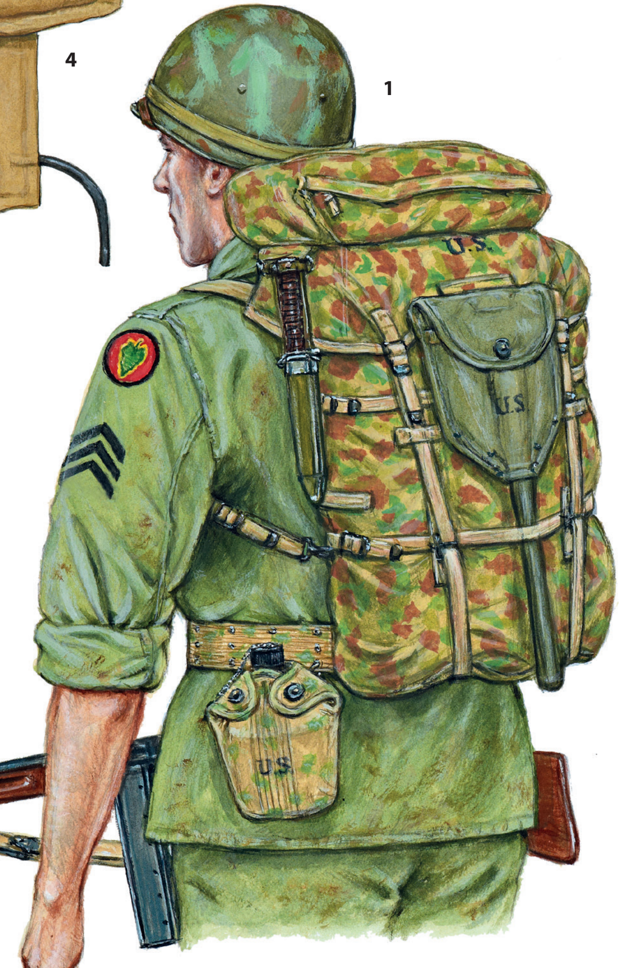

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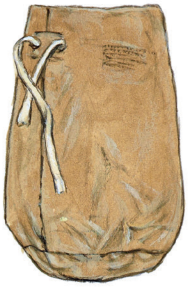

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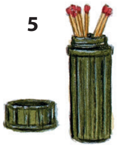

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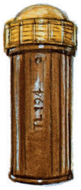

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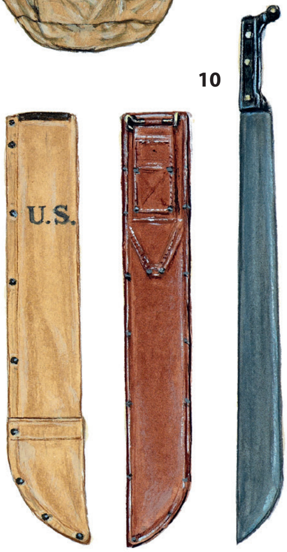

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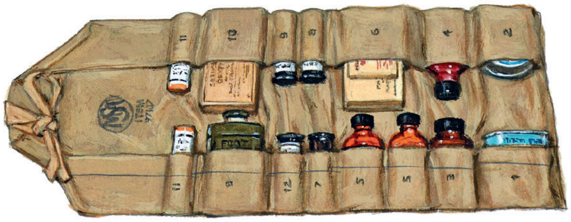

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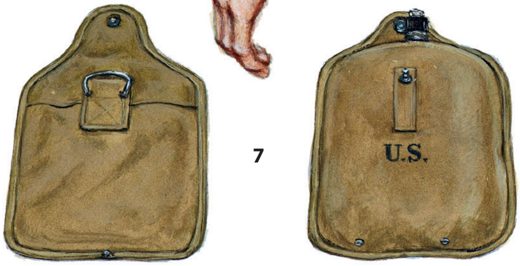

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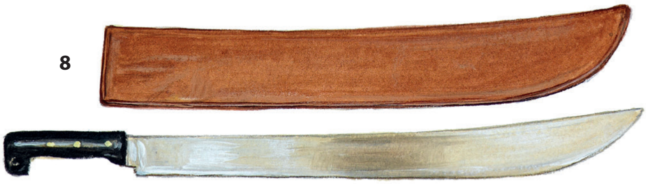

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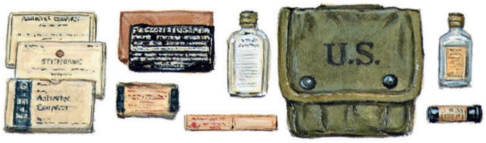
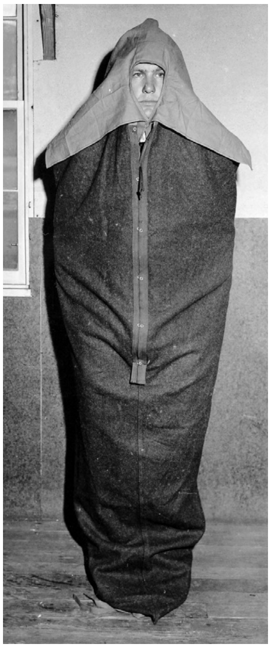


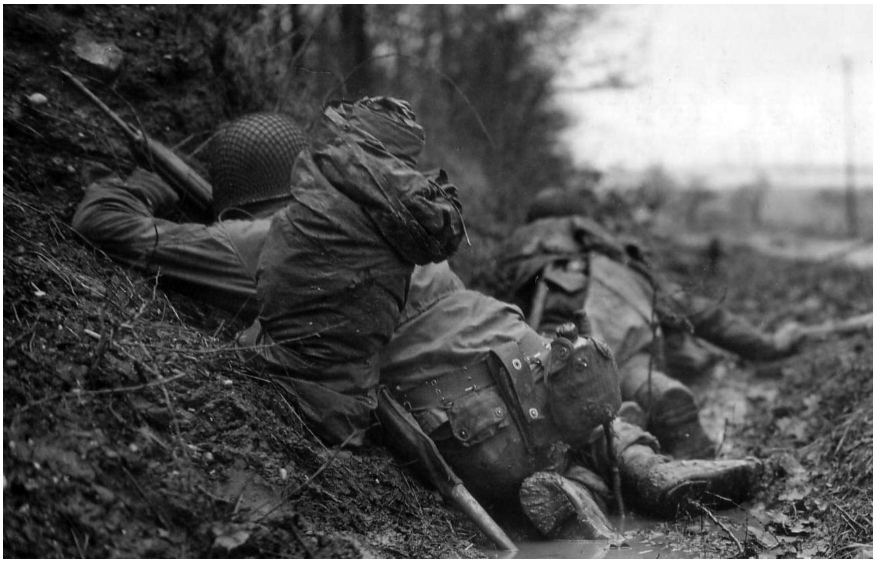


Demonstration of the "mummy bag" issued from late 1944, here without its dark OD water-repellent cover. This illustration shows the tan-colored liner, which can be folded to cover the face or "funneled" to catch warm exhaled breath. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

In warm weather the case could be used alone without a sleeping bag, or with one or more blankets.

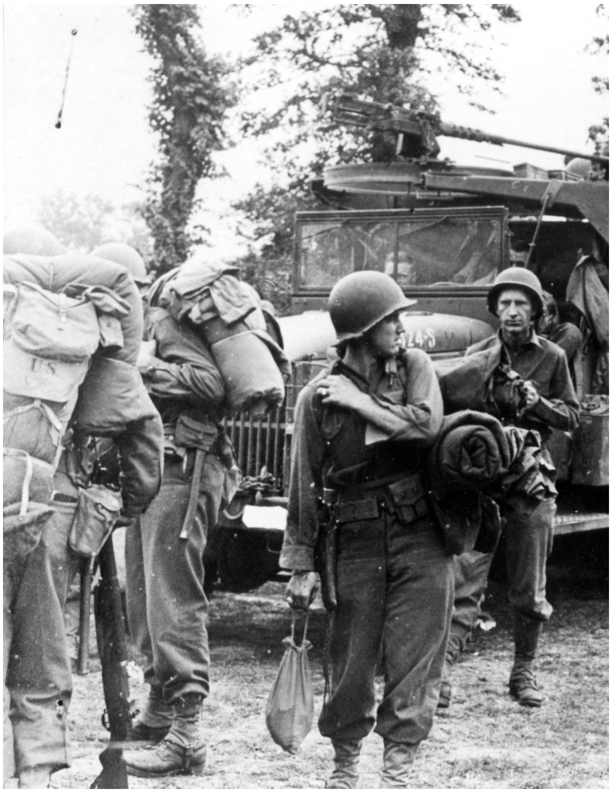
Officers and warrant officers deployed overseas were issued the M1935 waterproofed **bedding roll**. While officially restricted to officers, it is known that most tank, tank destroyer, armored car, and other motorized vehicle crews usually acquired them, and it was officially authorized for halftrack crews including armored infantrymen. Rolled open, it measured 76in x 28in and was designed to fit on a folding cot. It was not a sleeping bag in itself, having no insulating material. One or more wool blankets or a mummy bag were laid inside, along with a shelter half and accessories, insulated sleeping pad, thin commercially made batting mattress pad or air mattress, and a set of spare clothing. Rolled, it was 28in wide and had a diameter of 9–15in depending on the items rolled up in it. On both ends were permanently attached flat stowage bags, one secured by three buckles, the other by two (head end). Clothing and personal items were packed in these bags, and they were folded inward when rolling up the bedding roll. The head-end bag was packed with clothing and doubled as a pillow. The roll's bottom piece doubled as a ground-cloth, with flaps on both edges that folded inward overlapping the top. One short and three separate long straps were provided to secure the roll. Bedding rolls were carried in vehicles, not on the person.

The bedding roll for the M1928 haversack was completely inadequate for fall and winter weather. **Field bedrolls** were assemblages of minimal sleeping gear together with other items needed in the field. Their contents were usually prescribed by units, but there might be a certain degree of individual latitude. Tailored for the terrain and climate, their contents changed seasonally, and might include spare clothing, toilet articles, and personal items. Bedrolls were usually rolled in a waterproof cover provided by the shelter half, poncho, or a waterproof clothing bag. Typically the bedrolls were limited to a diameter of no more than 15 inches. The bedrolls or bags were tagged with the individual's name and unit and were carried in company and battalion transport, being brought forward at night and returned in the morning. Often troops used whichever bedroll was tossed to them from the truck. In many units, soldiers simply kept one or two rolled



Infantrymen spent an inordinate amount of time in roadside ditches. This rifleman carries a rolled-up sleeping bag, probably secured by a cord sling. On the back of his belt, between his entrenching tool and canteen, are a lensatic compass case, and a brown leather CS-34 tool pouch. The latter contained a TE-33 tool set, with a TL-29 electrician's knife and TL-13 side-cutting pliers; many infantrymen were able to obtain this handy kit. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press) blankets tied up and slung on their back by a suspension cord, including a raincoat and/or overcoat depending on the weather. Of course, during high-tempo close combat it might be days before soldiers saw their bedrolls. Airborne units would leave their bedrolls with the rear element, to be delivered once the ground or seaborne echelon linked up with the deployed parachute/glider unit.

Another method of providing bedding to forward troops was for the company to prepare three types of squad bedrolls, which would be delivered to squads in different combinations as needed, and depending on available transport, weather, existing shelter (buildings), and the tactical situation. One contained two wool blankets per man in the squad (a total of 24 blankets) for mild weather; another contained a wool sleeping bag and one wool blanket per man for colder weather (these first two bundles could be combined in yet colder temperatures); and the third type contained 12 shelter halves with accessories to erect six pup tents if bivouacked behind the frontlines. Naturally, the practices in different units varied.



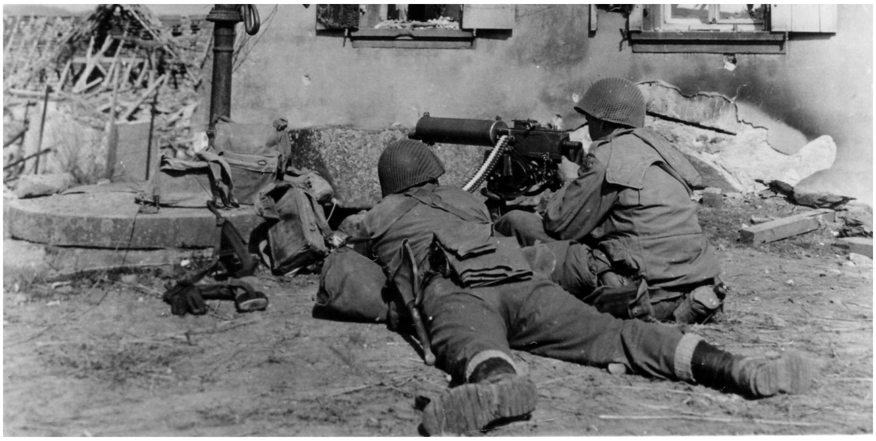
Men arranged and carried their bedrolls according to preference, either attached to their backpack or slung on a cord across the body. These reinforcements unloaded from trucks near St-Lô, Normandy in late July 1944 show a variety of types, from the full M1928 "long pack" (left), to a casual roll slung to the hip of the pistol-armed soldier (foreground). Note the M1910 hatchet (second from left) hooked to the left side of the cartridge belt, and (center) what appears to be a waterproof food bag. (NARA)

The lightweight **poncho** was developed as a desert warfare item to provide a simple shelter and rain garment, but was found to be useful in any environment. Influenced by the successful 1941 US Marine Corps poncho, its development began in 1942. (Ponchos had in fact been used by the US Army from World War I to the late 1930s, when they were replaced by the inadequate M1938 raincoat.)

Ponchos began to be issued in early 1944. (To make up for shortages, poncho-like British Mk VIII ground sheets were also issued.) The rectangular synthetic resin-coated aircraft nylon poncho was treated on both sides. It measured 81in x 64in; a head-opening in the center had a raised "turtleneck" collar with a drawstring, allowing it to be fully closed. It lacked an integral hood. There were tie-down grommets in each corner and midway along the long edges, and eight snaps on both long edges.

Ponchos could be carried wrapped around a bedroll or horseshoe roll, or folded in a square or rectangle, or tightly rolled and carried inside a pack; they could also be carried folded into a long rectangle and doubled over the back of the belt. The poncho was used as a rain cape, ground sheet, pup tent floor, bedroll cover, foxhole cover, lean-to tent, blackout curtain in occupied structures, or as a non-reflective cover for a parked vehicle's windshield. When it was worn as a rain cape the long-edge snaps could be fastened to form sleeve-like arm openings, but such use caused sweating or condensation inside. Of course, in direct combat it was impractical to wear ponchos; they restricted movement, hampered the use of weapons, glistened (even in the dark), and were noisy when passing through vegetation.

Two ponchos could be snapped together along the long edges and erected as an open-ended, two-man pitch tent. A poncho with two carrying poles



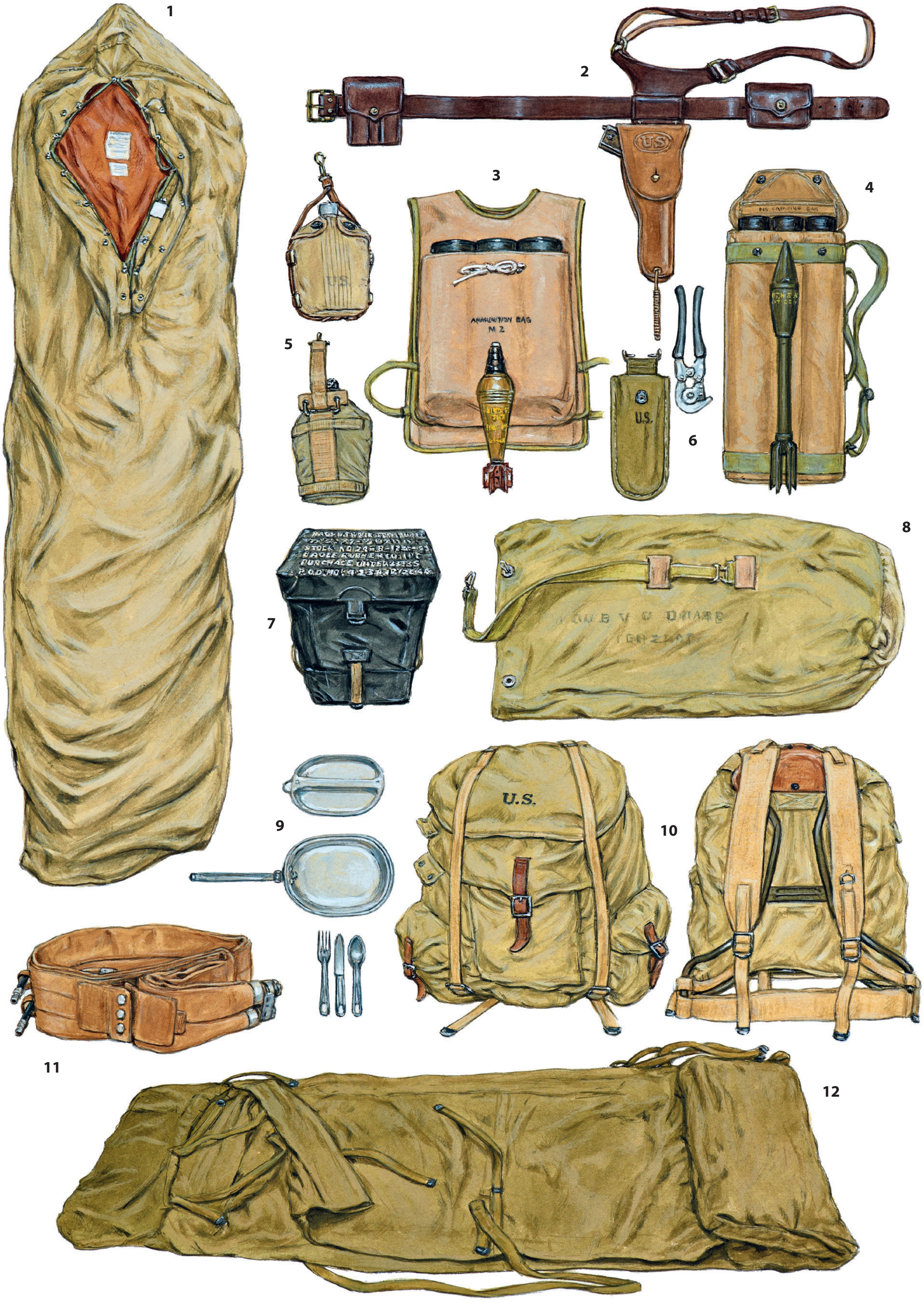
The crew of a .30cal M1917A1 Browning water-cooled heavy machine gun lay down suppressive fire to cover attacking infantry. The assistant gunner has a folded lightweight poncho tucked under the back of his belt – a common way to carry it. The large boxy-looking bag visible just to the left of his shoulder is an ammunition carrying bag (often incorrectly called an "M1 ammunition bag"; see Plate B7), which in this context would hold a 250-rd machine-gun feed belt. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

made a field-expedient litter. Casualties could also be simply laid on a spread-out poncho, and carried for a short distance by 4–6 men gripping the edges. A poncho (or shelter half) could be tightly wrapped around a 1–2ft-diameter bundle of 3–4ft-long limbs and branches and bundled tightly with rope, cord, or wire. Such a "poncho raft" or "brushwood float" would keep a man afloat as he clung to it.

The **shelter-half tent** or "pup tent" consisted of a square two-piece waterproofed cotton duck side panel with a triangular flap on each end – a previous type was identical but had a flap only on one end. The new type was standardized in October 1941 and a second end flap was to be sewn to existing shelter halves, but owing to canvas shortages this was not undertaken until the fall of 1943. The side panel was 64in long x 59in high, the end pieces 52in on the bottom edge and 56in on the upper edge. An erected new-type tent measured approximately 12.8ft x 5ft and stood 3ft 7in high. Shelter-half accessories carried by each soldier included a 6ft guy line, five 8in wood pins, and a three-section pole. Two shelter halves carried with accessories by paired-up soldiers were

G MISCELLANEOUS SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

(1) The wool sleeping bag or "mummy bag" with waterproof case, supplied from late 1944.
(2) Military Police leather belt assembly, with M1916 garrison belt, shoulder belt, pistol hanger, M1916 holster, and magazine and first aid pouches.
(3) M2 ammunition bag, a tabard-like vest with pockets front and back. Each could accommodate three 81mm (as here) or four 60mm mortar rounds, four 2.36in bazooka rockets, or a 250-rd ammunition can.
(4) M6 rocket carrying bag with three 2.36in bazooka rounds. Prior to 1944 the bag was secured by only one LTD fastener.
(5) Front of M1917 (above) and rear of M1941 mounted canteen covers. Mainly issued to mechanized cavalry, tank, and self-propelled artillery units, they could be hung on racks inside vehicles. The M1917 was also made with a web strap instead of leather.
(6) M1938 wire cutter and carrier; the cutter was resistant to an electric charge of 5,000 volts.
(7) Six sizes of rectangular "bags, waterproof, special purpose" were provided to protect signal equipment, medical supplies, and demolition charges during amphibious operations. This example measured 12 x 7½ x 7½ inches.
(8) The duffle bag – the soldier's "suitcase" – measured 37in x 18in when flattened.
(9) M1932 meat can (aka "mess kit") with M1926 utensils. In combat most soldiers simply carried a spoon for their K- and C-rations.
(10) Back (left) and front views of the 1942 rucksack with tubular steel frame, issued to mountain and Arctic troops.
(11) The M1926 life preserver belt was a US Navy procurement, provided to troops conducting amphibious assaults. It was partially or fully inflated by means of two CO2 cartridges, with oral inflation as backup. It was intended to be worn high under the arms, but was often seen around the waist; since a burdened soldier was top-heavy, he could tip over and, unable to right himself, might drown.
(12) The M1935 bedding roll was issued to officers, and was also acquired by many armored fighting vehicle crews. It measured 76in x 28in unrolled; when rolled, the diameter depended upon the sleeping bag, blankets, and clothing rolled up in it. Fold-over bags at each end were used to stow spare clothing, washing kit, and personal items.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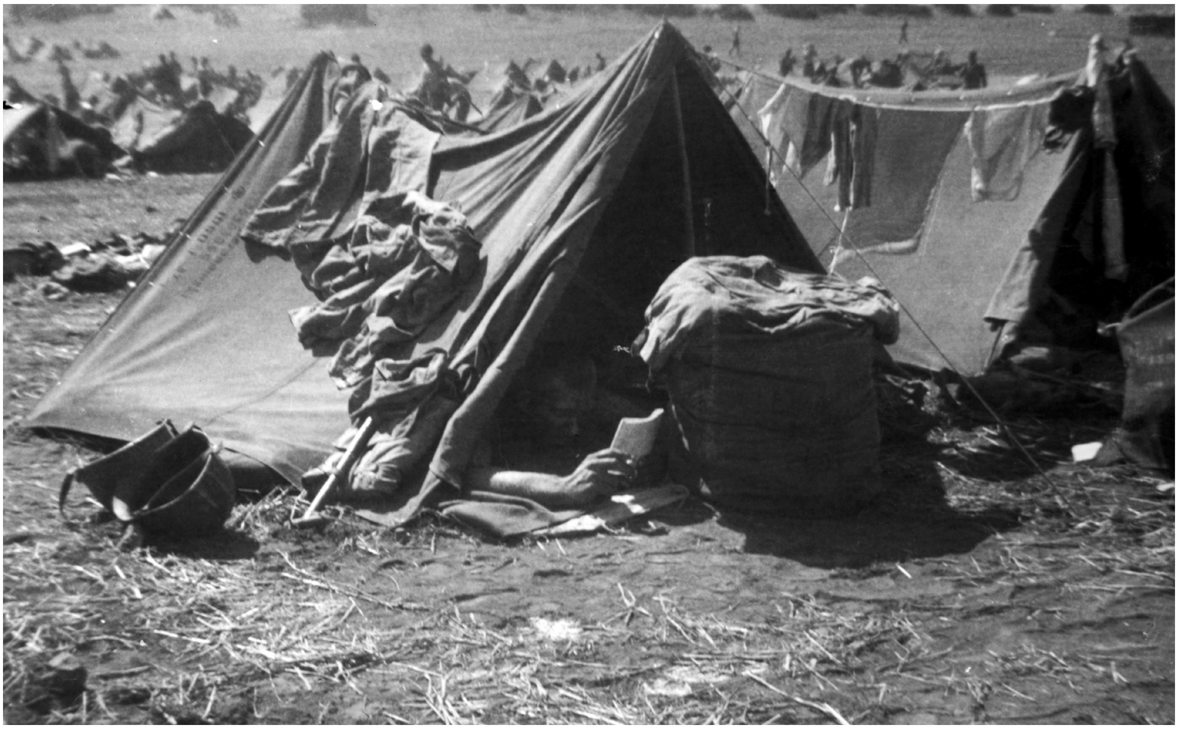


After a rainstorm in Italy, clothes and equipment are spread out on, or hung on washing-lines strung between, two-man "pup tents" made with the new-type shelter half. Such tents lacked floors, and flooded easily; troops learned to floor and insulate them with leafy branches, pine or fir boughs, or straw – when available. (Texas Military Forces Museum)

buttoned together for a two-man tent, which experienced men could pitch in 5–7 minutes. Depending on the unit, officers too might pair up to erect tents, but many units provided a complete tent to each officer.

Shelter halves were often kept with the bedrolls in unit transport and used to cover them for weather protection. The shelter half could be used as a hasty rain fly, lean-to, windbreak, waterproof/windproof blanket, to cover vehicle windshields to prevent reflection, or as a blackout curtain in occupied structures. Troops at the front sometimes used them as ground-cloths, or rolled up in them with their wool blankets as a form of sleeping bag, though heavy rain and wet ground would soak through the fabric. Foxholes for two men, 2–3ft deep, were dug in rear areas that were vulnerable to air and artillery attack, with pup tents erected over them for weather protection. In rainy weather the tent was "trenched," that is, a small drainage ditch was dug around its edges and the soil piled on the tent skirts to "seal" them. Often hay, straw, pine/fir needles or boughs, fallen leaves, etc. were laid on the floor for insulation and damp-protection. A complete new-type shelter tent of two shelter halves with accessories weighed approximately 13 pounds.

The US Army prescribed a two-man "rifle float" which could be prepared in 7 minutes. Two shelter halves – one on top of the other – were placed on the ground, and two packs, web gear, and the soldiers' removed clothing and boots were placed on them. The rifles were crossed to provide rigidity and placed on top of the packs, gear, and clothing, and the four corners of the outside (bottom) shelter half were tied to the rifle muzzles and butts with the tent guy lines. In a similar manner, a float using two 3ft sticks or two shelter-half poles instead of rifles would float an LMG, 60mm mortar, or two BARs. A "poncho raft" or "brushwood float," as described above with the lightweight poncho, could also be made using a shelter half.

SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT

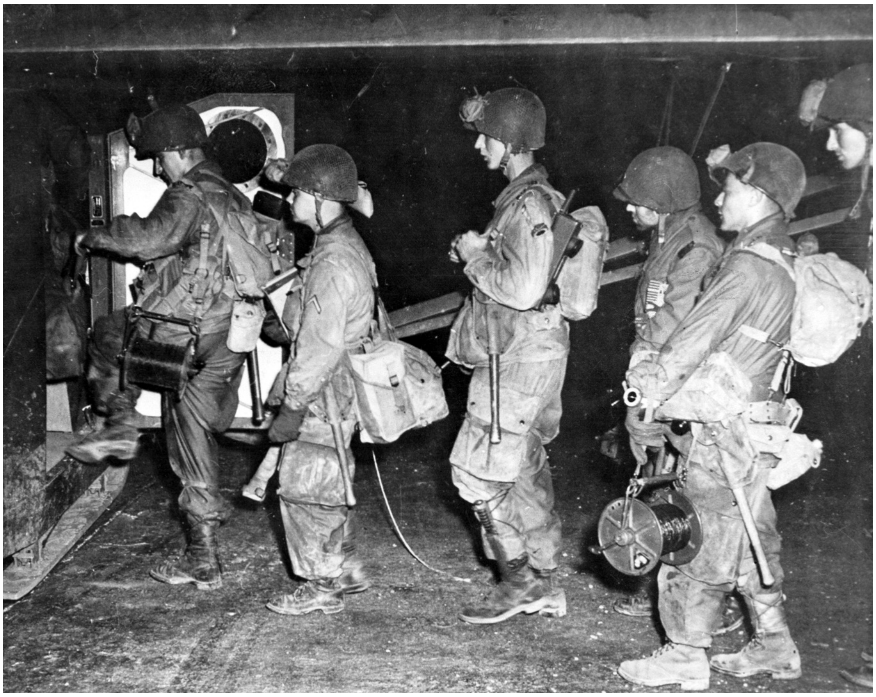
Leaders' equipment

Up until 1942–43, company-grade **officers** (lieutenants and captains) of infantry and other combat arms, as well as field-grade officers (majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels) at battalion and regimental levels, typically carried an M1936 pistol belt, M1936 suspenders, M1936 musette bag, M1916 pistol holster, "M1912"/M1918/M1923 pistol magazine pocket; M1938 lensatic compass and case, M13, M16, or M17 binoculars with M17, M24, or M44 cases, respectively; M1910 canteen, cup, and cover; M1924/M1942 first aid pouch, M1938 dispatch case, and TL-122 series flashlight. It was noted that this collective difference in equipment from that carried by riflemen could identify officers to snipers, with the result that some officers carried equipment more similar to that of enlisted men or otherwise strove to be less conspicuous.

In 1942–43, company-grade officers' M1911A1 pistols were replaced with M1 carbines and one to five carbine magazine pockets (depending on branch); field-grade officers usually retained pistols, but some preferred carbines. There are instances of company- and even field-grade officers carrying M1 rifles – not so much to make themselves appear like riflemen, but because they preferred the Garand's range, penetration, and knockdown power.

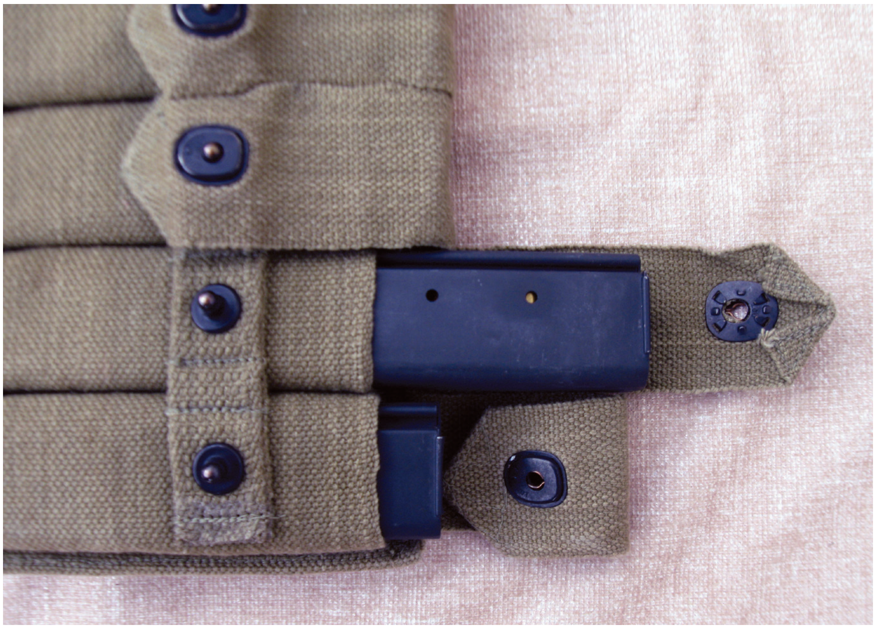
Most field officers and senior NCOs carried an M1938 lensatic compass. Junior NCOs and some specialists carried the liquid-filled wrist compass, as did all paratroopers.

The **M1938 dispatch case and dispatch case insert** ("map case") was a pouch measuring 11½in x 9in wide; when filled, it was up to 3in thick. It was

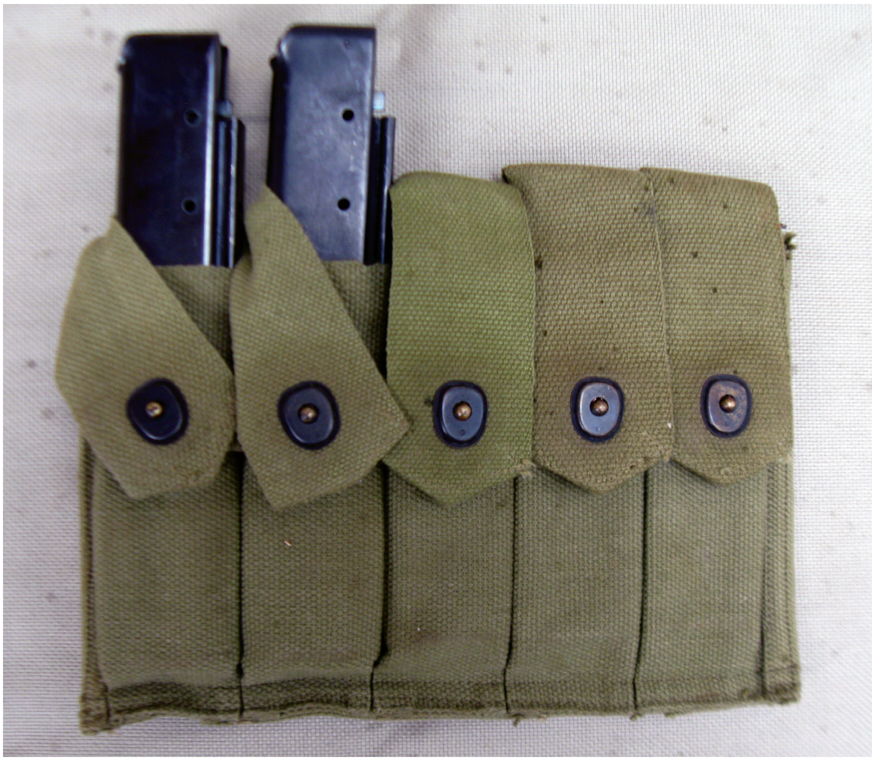


Paratroopers boarding a Waco CG-4A glider; the men at left and right carry 440-yd DR-8 telephone wire spools, and the tall trooper at center has an SCR-536 "handie-talkie" radio for platoon–company communications. All have M1936 musette bags, either behind their shoulders attached to the M1936 suspenders or slung on carrying straps to hang at waist level; all also have M1943 entrenching tools, and parachute first aid packets on their helmets. The right-hand man wears a wrist compass. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

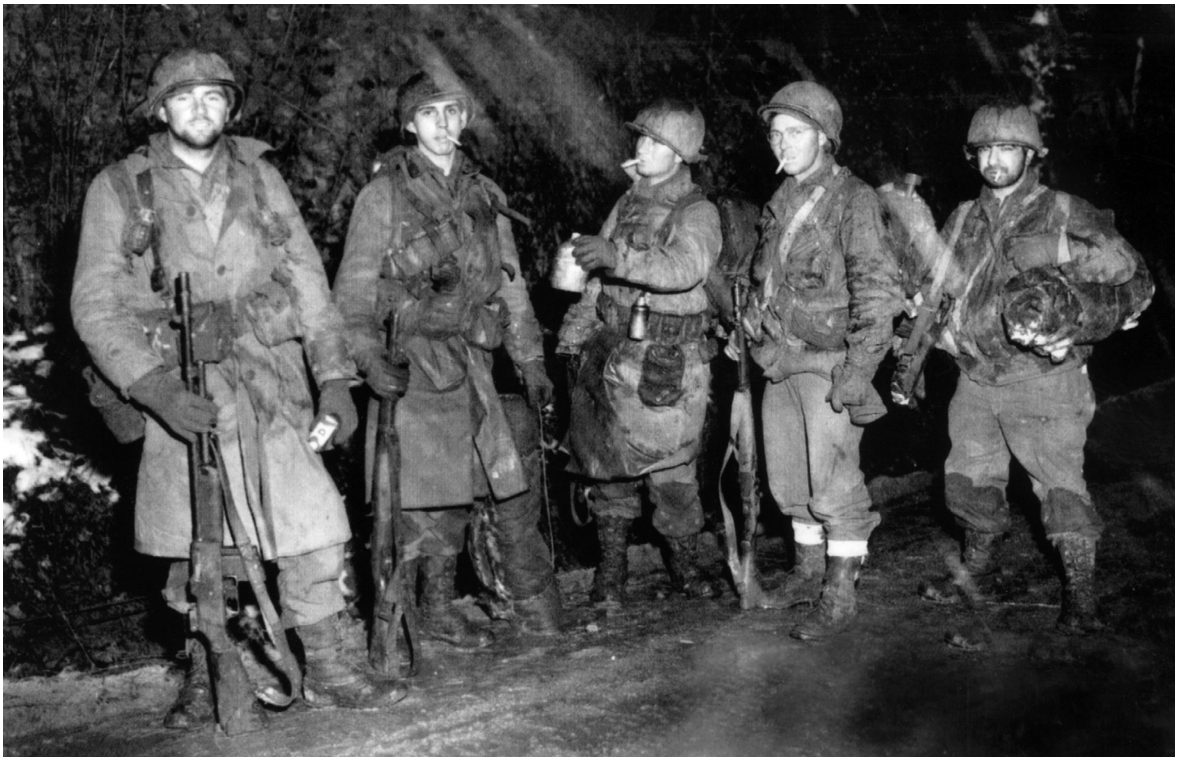
Detail of the five-pocket SMG magazine carrier, designed for these 20-rd magazines issued with the M1928A1 Thompson submachine gun. (Corey Helweg collection)



The M1 and M1A1 Thompson SMGs were issued with 30-rd magazines. When the three-pocket carrier for these was unavailable, they (and the similar magazines for the M3 "grease gun") could be carried in the 20-rd pockets; the flaps turned around them and snapped closed provided enough friction to retain them. (Corey Helweg Collection)



fitted with a large covering flap secured by two LTD fasteners; on the pouch front beneath the flap was a canvas patch with six double-loop pencil holders and two ruler slots. The dispatch case insert measured 10½in x 8in and was a removable acetate two-layer map-holder, with both sides overprinted with 1in red grid lines – but it was found that the red lines "disappeared" when viewed with a red-filtered flashlight. The insert had aluminum strips on the



The remnants of a combat-decimated squad (at full strength, 12 men); three of them wear the M1938 raincoat. The leftmost man is the BAR gunner, with an M1937 BAR magazine belt; next to him is the assistant gunner, also with a magazine belt, though two of the pouches would contain clips for his M1 rifle. The central man, offering his canteen, has a three-pocket grenade carrier hanging loose from his belt; the soldier at far right has a slung bedroll. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

long edges, and a flip-over cloth front cover to protect grease pencil markings on the acetate and to reduce reflections. Early-issue cases had a 1in adjustable shoulder strap with a small padded moveable section held on by four loops, and small snaphooks at the ends that fastened to small D-rings on the upper back of the case. From 1944, cases were provided a general-purpose carrying strap instead. Depending on the user's duties, items that might be carried in the dispatch case included:

Tactical geodetic maps and map overlays; aerial photographs; map measurer; M1 or M2 transparent map template; semicircular or rectangular protractor (aka map romer); 6in or 12in wooden ruler; engineer map scale; L-shaped or rectangular coordinate scale.

Fountain pen; blue or black and red China markers (grease pencils); No. 2 or No. 3 lead pencils; small handheld pencil sharpener; rubber eraser; notepad or notebook; pocket memorandum book; blank overlay (tracing) paper.

Mimeographed, typed carbon copy, or handwritten field orders; pre-printed report forms; Signal Corps Message Book M-210, M-210-A or M-210-B; Signal Operating Instructions Book/Code Book; any pertinent field and technical manuals (FMs and TMs); firing tables for artillery or mortars. (See also "M1936 field bag" above, under "Backpacks.")

Weapons-related equipment

The **M1916 pistol holster** for the .45cal M1911A1 Colt pistol was of rigid leather with a large protective flap that was embossed with "US" within a bordered oval. The flap was secured by a small slit that engaged with a bronze stud on the holster body. On the back was a curved leather panel fastened by stitching and four rivets; on the panel were a double-hook, and two vertical slits for attachment to a trousers belt. Normally it was attached to the right side of the pistol or mounted cartridge belt. At the holster's muzzle end were eyelets for a leather thong used as a leg-securing tie-down. Holsters were made of tan, to russet brown, to dark brown leather. (The M1909, M2, and M4 holsters were used with the M1917 revolvers.)

The **M15 grenade launcher sight case** was used with the M1 grenade launcher on M1903-series rifles, the M7 grenade launcher on the M1 rifle, and the M8 grenade launcher on the M1 carbine. It was a 2.5in x 8in envelope-type canvas case with a snap-closed flap, and a double-hook on the back. Most cases had a straight flap with rounded corners, but later ones had more rounded flaps. For mounting the sight on the rifle a circular mounting plate had to be screwed onto the left side of the rifle's stock beside the receiver; two wood screws and a paper positioning template were issued with the sight, along with mounting-instruction and range-table sheets. The sight could be removed from the mounting plate and stowed in the case when not needed.

The **three-pocket grenade carrier** was developed in 1943 to provide a safer means of carrying hand grenades than hanging them by the arming lever on suspenders or belts, and to protect them from the elements. There were two versions: the single-LTD fastener version with a V-shaped flap fielded in mid-1944; and the two-LTD type with a straight flap with rounded corners of late 1944. The single-LTD type measured 8in by 5in, to accommodate only fragmentation grenades; the two-LTD carrier measured 10in x 7in, to accept smoke/chemical grenades. The top pocket had a double-hook on the back, and the bottom had two 32in tie-tapes. (The very similar

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COMBAT MEDICAL AIDMEN'S EQUIPMENT

Medical personnel wore on their left sleeve a white armband with the red Geneva Cross and a stamped number, and carried special identity cards. When it was considered that the armband was not sufficiently conspicuous, red crosses on white backings began to appear on aidmen's helmets in Sicily in mid-1943. These markings did not become official until after the war, and there was no standard style, size, or placement; the white backing might be square or circular, the cross might be simply outlined white, and red crosses on all-white helmets were not unknown. It was rare for either helmet markings or armbands to be worn in the Pacific Theater, to avoid deliberate targeting by the Japanese.

(1) This technician 4th grade from 1st Armored Division, 1943, carries the medical enlisted man's kit in the form of two M1932 pouches, here in the shortened configuration with their bottom extensions laced up; they are carried on M1920 suspenders, with narrow web cantle-ring straps connecting the upper corners of the pouches across the belly and small of the back (these straps were sometimes discarded). Here, a TL-122C flashlight is clipped to the front strap. In the Mediterranean and European theaters aidmen, litter-bearers, and other medical personnel afforded protection under the Geneva Convention were not habitually armed; however, they were permitted to protect themselves and their patients, and this medic carries an M1911A1 pistol. In the Pacific Theater most aidmen carried pistols or M1 carbines.

(2) This "tech 5" displaying the patch of 75th Inf Div, *c.*1945, carries the same medical kit as the first figure, but the lacing has been removed to allow the pouches to expand to their full extent – the configuration most commonly seen.

Most items were carried in internal pockets, and the official contents changed over time; in practice, most medics carried the supplies that experience had taught them they would need. Most also carried an extra canteen so as to have enough water for casualties. Part but not all of the pouches' typical contents are illustrated below. There were similar kits for medical NCOs and officers, the latter having only one pouch.

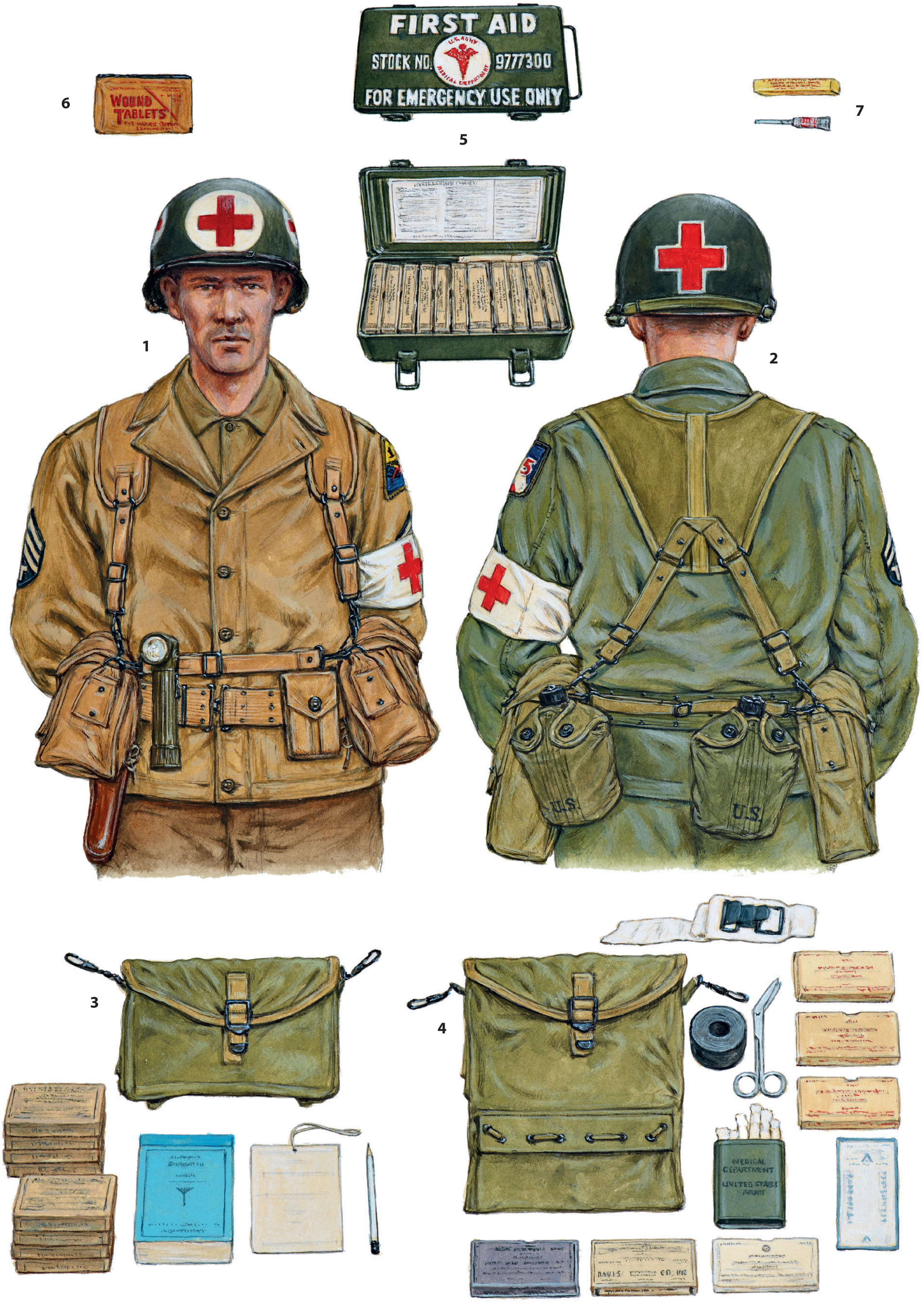
(3) The contents of this shortened right-hand pouch might include eight field dressings, two litter-carrying straps, a book of emergency medical tags, and a pencil.

(4) This extended left-hand pouch might contain ammonia spirits, iodine swabs, adhesive plasters, twelve 3in x 12yd gauze rolls, three triangular bandages, scissors, forceps, and safety pins. Pouches often contained additional dressings, tourniquets, and morphine syrettes.

(5) The 12-unit vehicle first aid kit was issued one per four "softskin" vehicles, in a case measuring 11 x 4½ x 2½ inches. It contained various gauze compresses, dressings and bandages, burn-injury and eye-injury dressing sets, iodine swabs, ammonia ampoules, scissors, and forceps. A 24-unit set was provided in all armored fighting vehicles.

(6) Soldiers were issued a box of either eight (illustrated – 3½in x 2in) or 12 sulfanilamide "sulfa" or "Wound Tablets," to be taken by casualties with plentiful water to reduce the chances of infection.

(7) Half-grain morphine syrettes incorporating a needle for injection were the standard immediate-use anesthetic; the box measured 2½in long and was marked "Solution of Morphine Tartrate/*WARNING:* May be habit forming."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WOUND TABLETS
FIRST AID
STOCK NO.
U.S. ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
9777300
FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY
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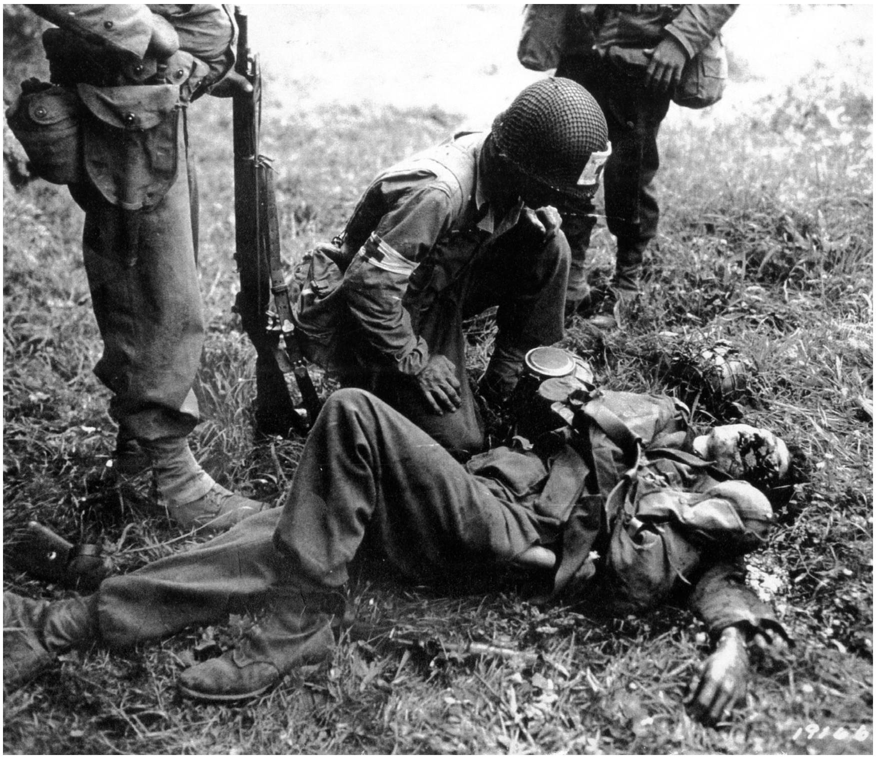
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT UNITED STATES ARMY
DAVIS CO. INC

A medic from 35th Inf Div in Normandy checking a dead German; he has a (second?) red-cross armband on his right sleeve, and a gauze pad marked with a red cross attached to his helmet netting. Another aidman, top right, carries very full medical pouches; he can be seen to have turned his Parsons field jacket inside out, so the darker blanket lining of the torso makes it less conspicuous. At left, the "pregnant" appearance of the rifleman is due to his having stuffed ammunition or other items inside his field jacket, with the cartridge belt cinched tight at the waist. He also appears to have cut the handle of his entrenching tool short to make it handier to carry. (NARA)



two-pocket grenade carrier was US Marine Corps issue, and was not used by the US Army.)

The **ammunition carrying bag** ("general purpose" or "ammo bag") was standardized in the spring of 1943 as a multipurpose carrier capable of carrying 19 different types of ammunition. (It is often incorrectly called an "M1 ammunition bag," which was an entirely different item.) The "ammo bag" was a 12in x 7in x 5in canvas case with a flap secured by a buckled strap. On the right interior side was a pocket of light fabric, which could be easily folded away – it otherwise took up about one-third of the compartment. Four small securing D-rings were attached high and low on the back edges. A reinforcing web strap was sewn to both sides and around the bottom; the strap's free upper ends were fitted with snaphooks, which could be fastened to a field-bag carrying strap. Alternatively, one of the short straps on the side could be snap-hooked to the lower D-ring on that side and used as a carrying handle. In 1944, D-rings replaced the snaphooks to accept the new general-purpose carrying strap.

The bag was organizational equipment rather than individual, and was issued to submachine gunners, rifle grenadiers, BAR ammunition bearers (x2 bags), all rifle squad members (increased to 20 bags per squad in 1945 – two per man), LMG section and squad leaders, HMG squad members (x13), and one per M9 pyrotechnic projector (for an M9 and flares).

An ammo bag could carry 4x 48-rd M1 rifle ammunition bandoleers, 14x 30-rd SMG magazines, 10x 20-rd BAR magazines, an ammunition can with a 250-rd machine-gun belt (or a belt only), 5x rifle grenades or rifle-launched pyrotechnic signals, 18x fragmentation hand grenades, 2x 60mm mortar rounds, 4x M7-series light antitank mines, or many other ammunition and pyrotechnic items. Paratroopers used them to carry British No. 75 Mk 2 "Hawkins" grenade-mines and No. 82 Mk 1 "Gammon" blast grenades.

Bayonets

American bayonets were designed to be carried on the left side of the belt or the left side of various backpacks. While scabbards were made of different materials, they had in common a steel throat to which the bayonet could be locked by the same latch used to lock it to the weapons' bayonet lug, and a double-hook to attach it to the belt or a pack's carrying tab.

The 16in **M1905 bayonet** was for the M1903-series Springfield and M1 Garand rifles. What are called "M1942" bayonets were actually new-production M1905s with black plastic rather than wooden grips. The M1905 (modified) scabbard had a wooden sheath covered by rawhide with an outer brown leather cover. The M1910 scabbard was the same, but covered in tan canvas with a brown leather tip. The M3 scabbard of 1941 was made of "hardened plastic," actually laminated woven-fiber molded thermoplastic, painted dark olive drab.

The 10in **M1 bayonet** of 1943, also for the M1903-series and M1 rifles, had an M3A1 "plastic" scabbard, redesignated the M7 in early 1943. The **M1905E1 bayonet** was an M1905 shortened to 10 inches.

The 17in **M1917 bayonet** (based on the British Pattern 1913) was fitted to the Enfield M1917 rifle, which was substitute standard and little used in World War II. This bayonet was also issued with 12-gauge riot-type shotguns. The M1917 scabbard was made of thick, rough-side-out leather painted OD, but this easily wore off and most that are seen are black.

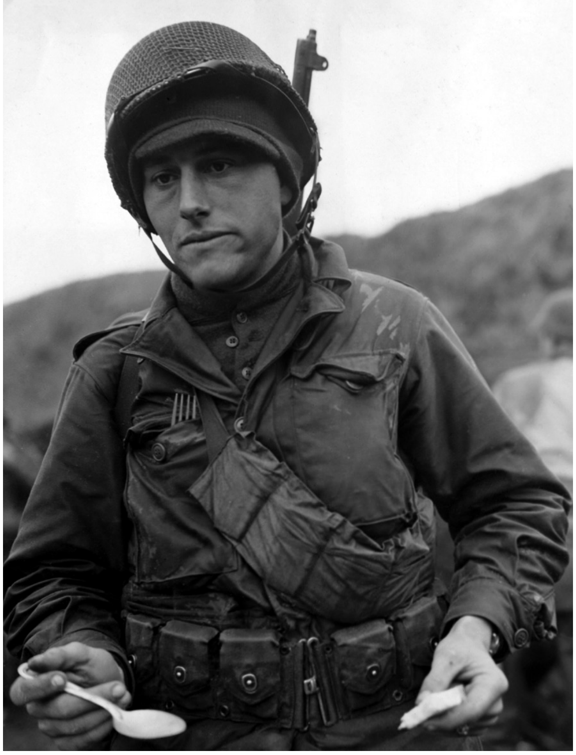
The 6.7in **M3 trench knife** was intended for issue to combat troops not provided bayonets, such as men armed with the BAR, carbine, or submachine guns. They were not widely issued as such, but were much used by paratroopers and Rangers. The M8 scabbard was made of OD "plastic" and had a web belt hanger without a double-hook.

The M3 knife provided the basis for the **M4 bayonet-knife** designed for the M1 carbine. It used the M8A1 scabbard with a web hanger and double-hook. Although adopted in mid-1944, few if any saw wartime service. The T2 bayonet lug assembly was added to new-production M1 and M2 carbines.

The very different **M1 ammunition bag** saw only limited use early in the war; mortar and machine gun ammunition bearers were issued two. It was an open-topped bag – 14.1in x 12.5in x 3.9in – with an adjustable web shoulder strap; this integral strap extended down both sides and around the bottom for reinforcement. Carried slung from one shoulder to the opposite hip, it was a very uncomfortable burden, since it bounced even at a walk; the open top also allowed ammunition to be lost, and gave no protection from rain and dust. It held 3x 60mm or 2x 81mm mortar rounds, 3x 2.36in bazooka rockets, or 2x stacked 250-rd M1 machine gun ammunition boxes – though one only was preferred, since two boxes weighed all of 44 pounds. The M1 was replaced by the M2 ammunition bag (below) and the ammunition carrying bag (above) in 1942, but remained in use.

The **M2 ammunition bag** or "apron pack" consisted of a canvas bib-type vest with a head-opening, and large open-top pockets secured by drawstrings on the front and back panels. On the lower sides were narrow buckled connecting straps to prevent the bag panels from bouncing. Each pocket could hold 4x 60mm mortar, 3x 81mm mortar, or 4x bazooka rounds, normally in their packing tubes, or 1x 250-rd .30cal ammunition can. The loaded ammo bags were heavy, hot, and provided no padding for the bearer's chest and back; they were also awkward to don and remove from the person when loaded. Some late-production bags had a heavy-duty wire quick-release hook arrangement on the right shoulder. A pair of kidney-shaped M3 pads was provided to protect the shoulders, but the bag could be carried without them.

The **M6 rocket carrying bag** ("bazooka rocket bag") was standardized in the spring of 1943. This was a flat canvas 25in-long bag with a covering flap secured by one or two LTD fasteners; the second fastener was added in 1944



A rifleman carried 80 rds of M1 ammunition in his M1923 cartridge belt, and another 48 rds in this six-pocket M1 ammunition bandoleer; troops going into combat typically carried one or two bandoleers, which varied in color from tan to dark OD, with an inch-wide shoulder strap. A black safety pin was even issued to adjust the strap length, or straps were simply knotted to fit. This GI, wearing his helmet over a knit jeep cap, was photographed at "chow time"; he holds an M1926 spoon, and a fork is tucked into his breast pocket. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)

to new-production bags, which changed the shape of the flap. Reinforcing web bands encircled the case's upper and lower ends. On the right edge were rectangular rings with a fixed, adjustable shoulder strap. On the same edge were two web loop carrying handles. The carrying bag was issued on the basis of two per bazooka, or three per bazooka in infantry companies. The **M6 parachutist rocket carrying bag** had the addition of a large snaphook on the upper back allowing it to be attached to the parachute harness. On the back of the bottom reinforcing band were two web tie-tapes attached to D-rings.

Tools

Combat troops were provided a variety of compact hand tools and their carriers. Most tools with wooden handles were painted OD Shade No. 22, as were the steel components. Picks and axes often had varnished handles rather than painted. It was common for previously varnished wooden handles to be painted OD during refurbishing – although it was known that varnished wooden handles were less likely to cause blisters than painted, because tools were carried on the individual soldier camouflage took priority over comfort.

The **M1910 entrenching shovel** ("T-handle e-tool") was issued to individual soldiers as a means of digging field fortifications, latrines, drainage trenches around pup tents, and for general bivouac chores such as chopping through brush and hacking roots. Originally, e-tools were issued with a partly sharpened edge, but in the spring of 1942 contracts called for them to be fully sharpened so as to be ready for immediate use upon issue. The e-tool had a 7in-wide round-nosed blade, and a fixed hickory shaft with a wooden T-piece fixed across the end; the overall length was 22¼ inches. The T-handle could snag on vegetation and barbed wire, especially when carried on the belt, where it reached below knee level. The tools were only issued to officers and warrant officers in combat zones when authorized by the theater commander.

The canvas blade-shaped **M1910 entrenching shovel carrier** had a double-hook on the back top (pointed end), and the shovel was secured inside by a buckled strap that was looped once around the base of the handle. The carrier measured 8¼ x 7¼ inches. Carriers were attached to the back of the M1928 haversack, jungle/M1943 pack, or combat field pack, as well as on the cartridge or pistol belt – commonly on the left side. The high location of the double-hook on the carrier caused it to hang too low when attached to the rucksack issued in mountainous/Arctic regions, interfering with climbing and skiing maneuvers. A special **rucksack entrenching shovel carrier** was introduced in 1942 with the revised rucksack. It was of the same design as the standard M1910 carrier, but with the double-hook on the carrier's lower end (handle opening) to allow it to be carried higher.

The Germans adopted a unique folding spade *(Klappspaten)* in 1938. The US Army, encountering it in North Africa in November 1942, adopted a copy

Allocation of tools

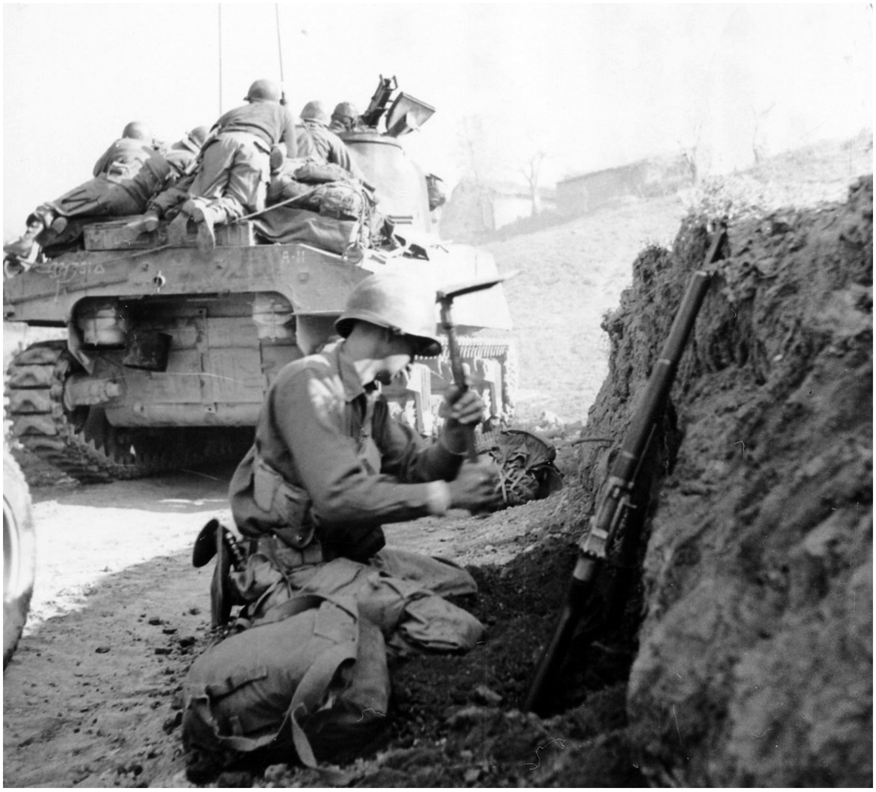
Infantrymen and other combat troops were issued a variety of small hand tools with web/canvas carriers that allowed them to be attached to belts or backpacks. The allocation below translates to 13 tools per 10 men, not counting the one machete per squad. Since there were nine 12-man rifle squads in a rifle company, this meant an uneven distribution of tools among the squads. Additionally, this did not take into account the company headquarters, the weapons platoon, and the three rifle platoon headquarters. Based on the tool allocation per 10 men, a 193-man rifle company would theoretically have 132 entrenching shovels, 36 picks, 18 axes, 36 wire cutters, and 14 machetes.

Tool	*Allocation*
M1910 or M1943 shovel	7 per 10 enlisted men
M1910 or M1943 shovel	1 per officer
M1910 pick-mattock	2 per 10 enlisted men
M1910 axe	1 per 10 enlisted men
M1938 wire cutter	2 per 10 enlisted men
M1942 machete	1 per rifle, machine gun,& mortar squad

Field artillery units were authorized, per 10 enlisted men: 6 entrenching shovels, 3 pick-mattocks, and 1 axe. Other branches had their own variations for tool allocation.

Paratroopers taking cover in a roadside ditch at St-Saveur-le-Vicomte, Normandy, July 11, 1944; note the cover of the M1943 entrenching shovel, which was issued as a priority to some paratroopers for the Normandy operation. (NARA)

This infantryman in Italy has dumped his M1943 field pack, and is digging into a roadside cut using an M1943 e-tool with the blade locked at a 90° angle for use as a pick. The soldiers riding on the M4 Sherman tank in the background carry only minimal web gear. (Tom Laemlein/Armor Plate Press)



in March 1943. The **M1943 entrenching shovel** did not see wide issue until late 1944, although some prototypes were issued for the Normandy landings. The M1943 "folding e-tool" had a pointed blade, straight wooden handle, and a screw-locking collar to fix the blade in straight, angled, or folded positions – 28in long extended, 21in folded. Its longer handle was more efficient than that of the M1910 without increasing the overall carrying length when the M1943 was folded. The adjustable blade allowed the tool to be used as a pick or hoe, since the blade could be locked at a 90° angle. The blade's edges could be used for hacking, and besides digging it was used to break open crates, cut strapping bands, and hammer in tent and aiming stakes. Soldiers were taught to use it as a hand-to-hand combat weapon with the blade in any position.

The **M1943 entrenching shovel carrier** was a blade-shaped pouch with a double-hook on the back, an LTD fastener-secured flap on the top end, an opening for the handle in the bottom, and reinforcing rivets plus web reinforcement on the bottom of the back to prevent the shoulders of the blade from cutting through. The double-hook on 1943-production carriers was fixed near the carrier's top (open end), while 1944 and later carriers provided three positions in which the hook could be fitted for better carriage on different types of packs or the belt.

The **M1910 entrenching pick-mattock with M1910 carrier** (or "pick") had a 17in detachable wooden handle with a steel head or blade, this having a pick on one end and a cutter mattock blade on the other, measuring 13¾in end-to-end. The head was slipped onto the handle and lodged in place by rapping the head-end of the handle on a hard object. These tools were valuable for breaking up hard, rocky, and frozen ground so it could be shoveled out.

The M1910 carrier required the tool to be carried dissembled. It consisted of a head-shaped canvas piece with a pocket for the pick end; the mattock end of the head-carrier was folded over it and was secured in place by a narrow, buckled web strap. Attached to the head-carrier were two web loops to hold the handle, the upper loop doubling as an attachment for the double-hook.

The **M1910 entrenching axe with handle and M1910 carrier** was a small single-edge hatchet with a hammer head on the rear (usually incorporating a nail-puller notch), and a wooden handle. Overall length was 15½in, and the head measured 5 x 3¼ inches. The axe was used to clear brush for fields of fire, chop wood for construction purposes and firewood, cut through roots when entrenching, hammer in tent and aiming stakes, hammer and extract nails, cut strapping bands, pry open crates, and lop off the heads of liberated chickens. It also made an effective hand-to-hand combat weapon, and soldiers were taught to use it as such. The M1910 carrier was an axehead-shaped canvas case with a rounded flap secured by a buckled strap, and a double-hook on the back for belt attachment.

The **22in M1939 machete with sheath** was a heavy tool with wooden or Bakelite grips. The polished blade – negating camouflage – proved to be far too long for effective use among dense vegetation. A slightly curved brown leather sheath had a brass throat with a double-hook.

The **18in M1942 machete with sheath** had black Bakelite or wooden grips, and was 22½in long overall with a 17⅛in straight-back blade. Initial production blades were polished, but in November 1942 they were directed to be produced with a dark, non-reflecting, rust-inhibiting finish. Sheaths were made from canvas, flexible light OD plastic, or brown leather.

CONCLUSION

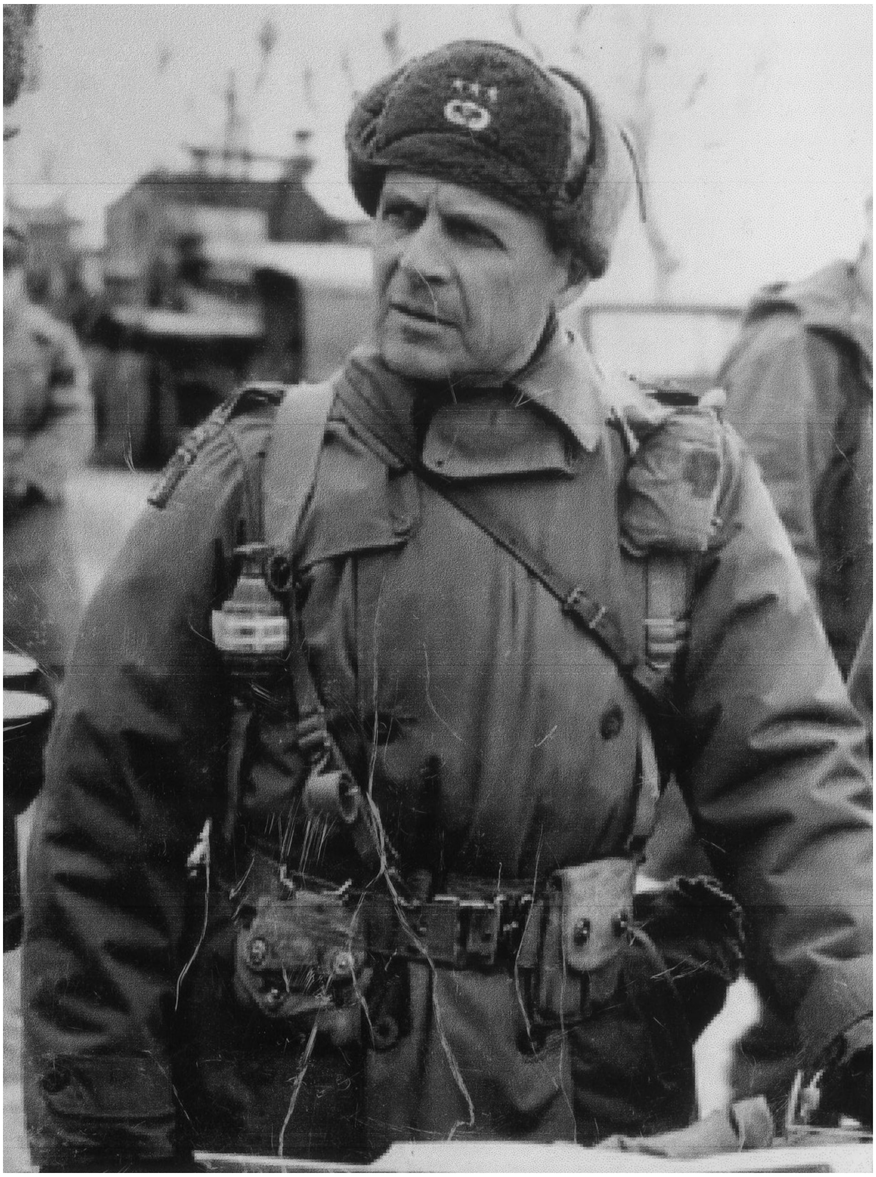
Most US web gear and other individual field equipment ranged from good to excellent in design, functionality, ruggedness, and versatility. The major problem area was the failure to design suitable backpacks; those that were issued for most of the war were based on outdated concepts, and an unrealistic judgment of what contents were necessary in modern warfare. Other items, such as effective sleeping bags and ponchos, were late in coming. Soldiers in below-freezing and rainy conditions were forced to rely on completely inadequate blankets, overcoats, and raincoats through most of the war.

Cotton canvas and webbing remained the primary construction materials – it would be another 20 years before lighter, more abrasion-resistant, less water-absorbent nylon was introduced. Leather fell further from use due to its poor durability in harsh climates.

US equipment was widely used by other countries during the war (e.g. Free France, Nationalist China, Brazil), and World War II designs, with slight changes in specifications, remained in use through the Korean War. Indeed, National Guard and Reserve units were still using late World War II and Korean War-made equipment well into the 1970s, as were many other armies. The US replacements fielded in the late 1950s, while introducing new design concepts and features, were still much influenced by World War II gear.

World War II and Korean War equipment is becoming increasingly scarce, and collectors should undertake measures to preserve it. Accurate reproductions of most of the items described in this work are available to re-enactors, who need not risk damaging the real thing.

Lt Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, who commanded 82nd Abn Div and then XVIII Abn Corps in World War II, is photographed here while commanding US Eighth Army during the Korean War. His equipment is unchanged: M1936 pistol belt and X-back suspenders; at right front, a lensatic compass case attached (unusually) to the top row of eyelets, above M1942 first aid pouch; and at left front an M1918 pistol magazine pocket. At his left shoulder a parachute first aid packet is attached to the suspender; at his right shoulder is a Mk IIA1 fragmentation grenade. He was alleged to have carried up to four grenades, which led to his nickname – "Tin Tits" – but in reality it was only one. (US Army)



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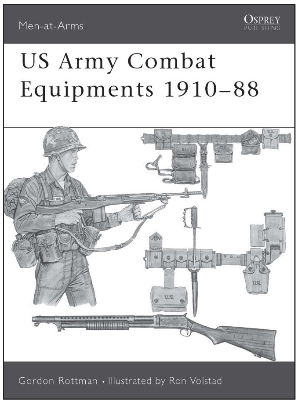

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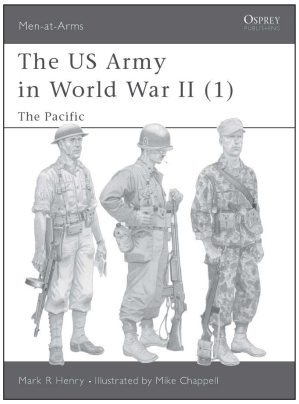

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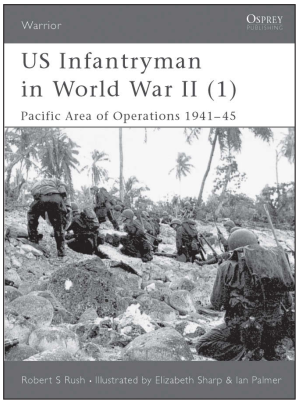

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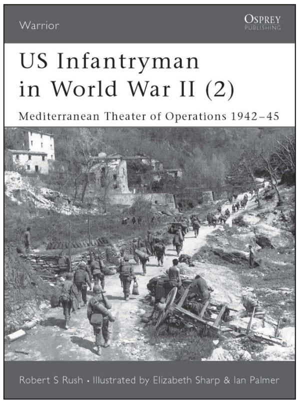

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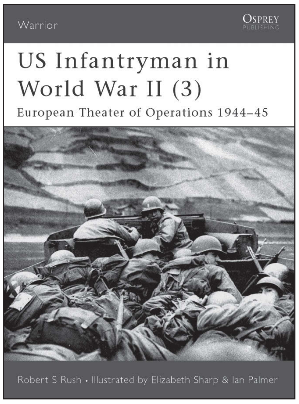

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